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**LEGENDS IN LIQUID MODERNITY: A CRITICAL
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN
LEGENDS**

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Esta Tese foi julgada adequada para obtenção do Título de “Doutor em Inglês: Estudos da Linguagem”, e aprovada em sua forma final pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês.

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I did not like to speak at that moment. For a long time had elapsed, and I had forgotten too much; I thought that I must first of all run over the narrative in my own mind, and then I would speak. And so I readily assented to your request yesterday, considering that in all such cases the chief difficulty is to find a tale suitable to our purpose, and that with such a tale we should be fairly well provided.

(The Dialogues of Plato: Timaeus)

ABSTRACT

Since the 1980's, Urban Legends (ULs) have been extensively studied by folklore studies (Brunvand, 1981, 1993, 1998, 2001, 2002), focusing on the role of these texts in society. Following the early focus on orally transmitted legends, more recent research has addressed the written format of ULs on the Internet (Genge, 2000; Noymer, 2001; Brednich, 2002; Dale, 2005; Lopes, 2007, 2008; DiFonzo & Bordia, 2007). In this context, the present research investigates textual and contextual features of contemporary ULs following the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995, 2003, 2004), a multidisciplinary field to the study of texts that stresses the bidirectional relation between texts and contexts. The texts in this study are analyzed as a type of discourse and genre, examined in relation to specific lexicogrammatical features viz. TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and exponents of Modality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), and discussed both in terms of their immediate context of situation and of the broader context of culture. Besides, aspects of the representation of social practices, social actors and legitimation are explored applying van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) sociosemantic categories. In order to discuss the sociological component of language in the data, I propose to look at these texts as social semiotic activities in a globalized context that Bauman has called Liquid Modernity (2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011a, 2011b). Results show that though relying on the narrative structure, contemporary Urban legends can be considered a type of hortatory discourse; the textual and contextual parameters allow the readers to identify with the victims' position, creating a virtual group of 'us' (possible victims) versus 'them' (deceivers), and the mundane, daily contemporary environments and social actions are represented as unsafe and fearful. Results also show that the writers/senders establish a degree of intimacy with the readers, rely on a series of legitimation techniques to manipulate belief in fabulous events and entice the re-transmission of the texts. Furthermore these stories can be seen as a social practice that represents and propagates the fears and insecurities which are characteristic of liquid modernity.

Keywords: Urban Legends; Discourse and Culture; Fear; Liquid Modernity;

RESUMO

Desde a década de 1980, as Lendas Urbanas (LUs) tem sido bastante estudadas pelos estudos de folclore (Brunvand, 1981, 1993, 1998, 2001, 2002), que focalizam o papel desses textos na sociedade. Seguindo o foco inicial em lendas transmitidas oralmente, pesquisas mais recentes têm abordado a forma escrita das LUs na Internet (Genge, 2000; Noymer, 2001; Brednich, 2002; Dale, 2005; Lopes, 2007, 2008; DiFonzo & Bordia, 2007). Nesse contexto, a pesquisa aqui apresentada investiga características textuais e contextuais de LUs contemporâneas seguindo a perspectiva da Análise Crítica do Discurso (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995, 2003, 2004), uma área multidisciplinar para o estudo de textos que destaca a relação bidirecional entre textos e contextos. Os textos nesse estudo são analisados como um tipo de discurso e gênero, examinados em relação a características lexicogramaticais específicas viz. TRANSITIVIDADE, MODO e expoentes de Modalidade (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), e discutidos tanto em relação ao contexto de situação imediato quanto ao contexto de cultura mais amplo. Além disso, aspectos da representação de práticas sociais, atores sociais e legitimação são explorados com a aplicação das categorias sociosemânticas de van Leeuwen (1996, 2008). Para a investigação do componente sociológico da linguagem nos dados, proponho que olhemos para estes textos como atividades socio-semióticas em um contexto globalizado a que Bauman se refere como Modernidade Líquida (2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011a, 2011b). Os resultados mostram que, apesar de ter como base a estrutura narrativa, as Lendas Urbanas contemporâneas podem ser consideradas um tipo de discurso exortativo; os parâmetros textuais e contextuais permitem ao leitor identificar-se com a posição de vítima, criando um grupo virtual de ‘nós’ (possíveis vítimas) versus ‘eles’ (enganadores) os ambientes e ações sociais mundanos, diários e contemporâneos são representados como inseguros e passíveis de medo. Os resultados também mostram que os autores/retransmissores estabelecem um grau de intimidade com os leitores, utilizam uma série de estratégias de legitimação para manipular a crença em eventos fabulosos e incitar a retransmissão dos textos. Além disso, essas estórias podem ser vistas como uma prática social que representa e propaga o medo e a insegurança que são característicos da modernidade líquida.

Palavras-chave: Lendas Urbanas; Discurso e Cultura; Medo; Modernidade Líquida.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Urban Legends are fabulous¹ narratives, not necessarily untrue, but which are usually exaggerated and sometimes based on real facts or worries (Berenbaum, 2001). Generally characterized by being apocryphal and told in different variants during a considerable period of time, most of these stories have characters and plot, with elements of mystery, horror and fear, being presented as cautionary tales. A study in Social and Organizational Psychology (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007) considers Urban Legends a collective way to make meaning “by telling tales that promote moral and cultural values and that amuse us.” (p. 29) Even though the origins of ULs may be uncertain, they began to be transmitted orally and assumed a written form after the advent of the Internet, which has also facilitated the spread of these stories globally through e-mails and more recently in the social networks.

The onset and public commercialization of the Internet since the beginning of the 1990’s has brought up a considerable change in people’s primary sources of information about the world. Until the end of the 1990’s, it could be said that written (especially in newspapers or magazines), televised and radio news were the main source of information for a large number of people all over the world (Caldas-Coulthard, 1997). Nowadays, on the other hand, it is estimated that over a quarter of the globe’s population use the Internet services as a source of information and entertainment².

Hence, assuming the increasing importance of the Internet as a source of information and more specifically of Urban Legends, as a cultural and discursive practice, this study aims at describing and explaining, through the lenses of Critical Discourse Analysis, how the form and function of twenty contemporary ULs, spread through the use

¹ Throughout this dissertation, the adjective *fabulous* will be used to characterize Urban Legends. Since the word can have different interpretations, it is noteworthy that, from the perspective of Folklore studies and in this study, *fabulous* refers to something that is barely credible, astonishing, as derived from the Latin *fabulosus*, which refers to a part of the nature of fables and myths.

² Data retrieved from the website of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a non-profit organization that manages the Internet Protocol Address Spaces (IP) worldwide. (<http://www.icann.org/>) in 04/01/2013.

of e-mail, relate to their socio-cultural contexts, focusing on the representation of social actors, social action and legitimation in such narratives.

1.1 CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION

Narratives have always been an important part of my life. I remember fondly the fairy tales I was told in childhood. Horror stories shared at sleepovers. Ghost tales about the school where I had my elementary education. But it was at my late teenage years, when I opened my first e-mail account that I met for the first time the stories I know now to call Urban Legends. At the time, these horrible or sometimes funny narratives called my attention. I wondered why people shared them, and with no clear purpose in mind, I started collecting them.

It was during my Master's degree studies in language at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina that I understood these texts could be more than simply entertaining stories. Taking a discipline in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with Professors José Luiz Meurer and Viviane Heberle, I was introduced to the concept of social semiotics and to the work of their research group Nupdiscurso (Núcleo de Pesquisa Texto, Discurso e Práticas Sociais), which I now belong to.

Through Nupdiscurso, I learned that the range of texts that can be analyzed from a CDA perspective is endless. Members of the group had previously discussed comic books (Veloso, 2002, 2006), video games (Souza, 2010), letters to the editor (Fontanini, 2000), advertising (Grim, 1999; Böhlke, 2008), music (Oliveira, 2007) and literary texts (Felippe, 2001; Gallardo, 2001), just to name a few. More recently, the group has been interested in multimodal texts (Heberle & Meurer, 2007; Bernardon, 2005; Grunschy, 2007; Ferreira, 2011; Bezerra 2008, 2012) and some researchers specifically in the new multimodal genres of the Internet (Martins, 2009; Lorensen, 2010).

Being a member of this group, then, allowed me to realize Urban Legends could be subject to qualitative investigation. And it was in this productive environment that I was inspired to develop the research project which led to the dissertation I present here.

So far, Urban Legends (ULs henceforth) have been studied by different areas of knowledge, such as sociology, social psychology and folklore studies. According to Lopes (2007), sociologists see ULs as a collective answer to fears, anxieties and beliefs of specific social groups. In that sense, such stories are told as a means of instruction,

especially in the realm of morality (Harding, 2005; Brunvand, 1981, 1984, 1993, 2002; Berenbaum, 2001). Urban Legends, then, “become a medium through which important ideas are transmitted from one generation to the next, similar in many aspects to fairy tales in which sub-textual meanings are hidden.” (Harding, 2005, p. 16) These narratives would then question the beliefs of the community where they appear, at the same time that they constrain and reinforce that group’s identity, as will be shown in this dissertation.

Following a similar view, where the understanding of human action is bound up with its context, social and organizational psychologists believe ULs give people the chance to verbalize their fears, and by explaining our fears, we would get rid of the oppressive feelings that are generated by them.

Folklorists defend the idea that more important than the scientific truth behind the legends is the ‘truth’ that folklore transmits about the same attitudes, fears and beliefs discussed by sociologists. Several authors (Brunvand, 1981, 1984, 1993, 2002; Harding, 2005; Berenbaum, 2001; Brednich, 2002 and Genge, 2000) remind us that while a few ULs are based on real life incidents, most are purely made up tales. However, whether or not such stories have basis on real facts has no influence on their status as Urban Legends. Their truth stands in their values and cultural significance. As Harding (2005) has pointed out, “what must be taken as true is that the stories themselves tend to be a subconscious (sometimes conscious) reflection of the concerns of the individuals in the societies in which the legends circulate and evolve.” (p. 17)

In the area of linguistics, ULs have been accepted as a discursive genre (Lopes, 2007; Renard, 1994), but studies have focused on the French tradition of discourse analysis. To the best of my knowledge, no studies so far have analyzed ULs from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis or making use of the Systemic Functional Grammar as a tool.

What these previous studies show is that Urban Legends should not be accepted as simply trite and harmless stories. On the contrary, they are loaded with social information and misconceptions. As Harding (2005, p. 31) has argued, “To understand folklore and therefore the realm of the Urban legend is to understand the psyche of a nation.” Hence, through the study of ULs, we may glimpse the prejudices and fears that exist within the cultural groups where they are created and spread. It is taking this as an assumption that I developed the study presented here.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The advent of the Internet has enabled Urban Legends to become a worldwide cultural phenomenon. Before such development, folklorists tended to accept them as part of folklore oral tradition, and as such, subject to its corollary rule of stability. While maintaining a fixed central plot, stories change each time they are orally transmitted, creating variants in terms of length, details, style and performance techniques (Brunvand, 1981). As early as 1981, Brunvand himself suggested that “it might seem unlikely that legends – *urban*³ legends at that – would continue to be created in an age of widespread literacy, rapid mass communications, and restless travel.” (Brunvand, 1981, p. 1)

However, that was not the case. The use of e-mail has enabled written folklore to maintain the rule of stability, since each sender is capable of editing such stories according to his/her own knowledge of the topic before passing it along to the next readers. Besides, ULs continue to fulfill one important role in society, that is,

a means of instruction, particularly in the realm of morality and mores, and, in some cases, they can be used as a device to control the behavior of others, from groups of small children to whole nations. (Harding, 2005, p. 12)

Considering the perpetuation of such type of Folkloric narrative through time, and the role it has always played in society, I expect this study to offer a more comprehensive analysis of how the textual structures of Urban Legends relate to the social structure as a whole, contemplating the need for (a) studies that focus on language use as a social phenomenon and (b) studies of ULs as narratives, answering then the plead of Folklorists for narrative researchers to engage in this field (Brednich, 2002).

Besides, this study follows the belief that “if texts are read critically, discrimination and social asymmetries can be challenged”. Caldas-Coulthard adds that consequently, “social change can be achieved.” (Caldas-Coulthard, 1997, p. 7) Hence, the understanding of how and why Urban Legends are produced and reproduced may lead to significant developments in critical reading.

³ Author’s emphasis.

1.3 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study aims at presenting a Critical Discourse Analysis of Urban Legends using as analytical tools the Hallidayan Systemic-Functional Grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and Van Leeuwen's (1996; 2008) descriptive framework for the study of representation of social actors, social action, and legitimation. My main objective in the lexicogrammatical analysis is to unveil how the meaning-making choices of authors, at the level of the clause, work as to help these narratives achieve their main social purpose, which is to function as a means of instruction, especially in the realm of morality (Harding, 2005; Brunvand, 1981, 1984, 1993, 2002; Berenbaum, 2001). Van Leeuwen's framework, on the other hand, will allow me to discuss these representations in a systematic way, since it offers an inventory of the sociological and critical relevance of specific linguistic realizations.

The following research questions will guide the investigation:

- (1) From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, how can the textual characteristics found in ULs be related to the broader socio-cultural practices these Legends reinforce or challenge?
- (2) What characteristics of the TRANSITIVITY system predominate in these ULs? In other words, in the samples chosen for analysis, who are the participants represented in the samples, what kinds of processes are they involved in, in which circumstances, and what is their importance for the realization of discourse?
- (3) How is the interpersonal relationship between interactants established by the producer/reproducer of each UL?
- (4) Who are the social actors represented in the text and what sort of agency is awarded to them?
- (5) What kinds of social action are present in these texts and in what ways are they represented?
- (6) Which legitimation strategies can be found in these texts? Who is vested with authority, and how is this authority asserted?

1.4 METHOD

In order to achieve the objectives set out above, I make use of a Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2001) methodological framework. Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), van Leeuwen's sociosemantic categories (1996; 2008) and Narrative Studies (Toolan, 1988; Meurer, 1998; Longacre, 1996) will aid in the description of the data from a linguistic

perspective. Social Studies, covering both Folklore studies (Brunvand, 1981, 1984, 1993, 2002; Berenbaum, 2001; Genge, 2000; Craughwell, 1999) and Liquid Modernity (Bauman, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011a, 2011b), will be used as to contextualize such texts in the broader socio-cultural environments where they appear and are (re)transmitted⁴.

The choice of this framework is explained by the fact that these are all socially-oriented approaches, where language is seen as a semiotic system, that is, using language involves making meaningful choices and oppositions, which are established by social conventions. Accordingly, discourse in this study is understood as “language use conceived as social practice” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138).

Fairclough (1993) proposes that the analysis of discourse must consider three aspects: description, interpretation and explanation. In description, text must be analyzed formally. As there is no text without interpretation, it is analyzed to see how the conventions of social interaction are used in different genres⁵. The explanation brings light into the contribution of discourse to social action, as for example regarding ideological views and unfolding bias or power relations.

In order to carry out the analysis (in Faircloughs’ terms, description) of the Urban Legends, I will draw on the Hallydayian Systemic-functional grammar, making use of two of its three systems of analysis: the TRANSITIVITY⁶ system and the MOOD system. Such analysis will be carried out clause by clause in each selected UL. The ideational and the interpersonal metafunctions will be considered as follows: the types of processes, participants and circumstances in these texts uncovered by the analysis of the TRANSITIVITY system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) will shed light on the ideational meaning of language, that is, on *what* is being represented. MOOD analysis can inform us about the roles and relationships between the interactants, degrees of formality or familiarity and attitudes expressed. Besides, the result of the TRANSITIVITY and MOOD analysis will be related to van Leeuwen’s sociosemantic categories (1996; 2008) in order

⁴ Detailed analysis procedures will be described previous to each analysis section in chapters 4 and 5.

⁵ Following the perspective of critical Discourse Analysis, genres are here understood as “ways of (inter)acting discursively” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 26).

⁶ Following Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), I will follow the convention whereby names of structural functions are spelt with an initial capital letter and names of systems all in upper case.

to clarify the way in which lexicogrammatical choices are connected to the broader and socially situated meaning making process. Summing up, through the analysis of lexicogrammar, I will investigate the way in which the content of the message is materially expressed, while semantics will unveil the discursive meanings these material realizations have in a specific context of use.

The interpretation of discourse, according to Fairclough, is related to the analysis of the discursive practices which examines aspects of production, distribution and consumption of texts (Heberle, 2000). The main focus here is to investigate how people produce and interpret texts and the relation to other orders of discourse. This level of analysis may be particularly interesting for the present study, as aspects of production, distribution and consumption of ULs have so far only been discussed by researchers in other areas such as sociology and folklore studies.

Focusing on *why* such narratives are created, accepted and reproduced, folklorists have long been looking for the origins of individual stories and tracing their variations and spread patterns in an attempt to enlighten our understanding of the role they assume in societies where they appear. It is known that

from narratives, major and minor, we learn much about ourselves and the world around us. Making, apprehending, and storing a narrative is making sense of things which may also help make sense of other things. (Toolan, 1988, p. xiii)

Because of that, looking at ULs as narratives and in the context of other rhetorical modes and genres will be an important aid for the present study's interpretation of how ULs can constitute a social practice.

The last level of analysis proposed by Fairclough is the explanation of socio-cultural practices. At this level, ideology and power are central concepts. Eggins (2004) reminds us that the use of language is influenced by our ideological positions, that is, our conscious and unconscious values. According to Fairclough, "ideology is the key mechanism of rule by consent" (1989, p. 33).

In order to better explain the *cultural* context⁷ where ULs are produced and reproduced, I propose the use of Bauman's Liquid

⁷ Notice the emphasis on cultural. The texts under analysis circulate on the Internet, which, in a Globalized world, trespasses state borders. Consequently,

Modernity (Bauman, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011a, 2011b).

1.4.1 DATA

The organization of folklore data into classificatory systems work as to facilitate archiving, analysis and comparative studies of such texts. Several attempts have been made in classifying ULs according to themes, meanings, functions, location, period of popularity or styles, but these have not been developed into complete systems so far (Brunvand, 2002). Even though no such system has been completely accepted, most scholars seem to follow an organization based on content. Brunvand (1993), the most prolific collector and researcher of Urban Legends both in oral and written format, proposes ten major categories of subject matters which have been followed or expanded by several of his peers (Brunvand, 2002; Craughwell, 1999; Genge, 2000; Harding, 2005), and hence will be accepted in this study:

1. Legends about automobiles
2. Legends about Animals
3. Horror Legends
4. Accident Legends
5. Sex and Scandal Legends
6. Crime Legends
7. Business and Professional Legends
8. Legends about Governments
9. Celebrity Legends
10. Academic Legends

This choice of following a pre-set categorization from Folklore studies presents a couple of difficulties, though. First, some categories overlap. If a story involves university students, sex and an automobile, for instance, it will be filed under one heading and cross-referenced with the other two. Because of that, it is not uncommon to find the same plots filed under different main headings by different authors.

Second, because Folklorists' interest lay on the plots of such narratives, and not on their textual organization and presentation, published collections present sanitized texts, where any additional comments by the teller/sender are excluded, incorrect use of language is

context is in this study is understood as a matter of ideological positioning, not of geographic location.

corrected and several times the plots are rewritten for clarity of exemplification or simply to fit the available space in print.

However, because such published collections do not present original texts, they will be used only for the selection of Urban Legends to be analyzed, but data was extracted from real e-mail communications. I have set up an e-mail account specifically for the collection of ULs in e-mail format, which was registered in several newsletters and Internet sites on the subject. I have also contacted several scholars and collectors interested in such Legends and a few have been kind enough to share with me the e-mail format Legends they have been receiving. Even though this study will only look at data in English, it is noteworthy that the data collected accounts to over two hundred samples in English, Portuguese, Spanish, French and German.

For the purpose of the present study, I propose the extended lexicogrammatical and semantic analysis of the two most frequent samples⁸ from data collected under each heading⁹. In cases where I have collected different versions of the same sample, the one chosen for analysis will be the first (chronologically) I have received.

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is organized in seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the research, providing general information on the theoretical background and research context, as well as explaining the research objectives, research questions and method.

Chapter Two presents the theoretical background which underlies this work, focusing on the specific concepts and categories used from Critical Discourse Studies, Systemic Functional linguistics and Social Studies.

Chapter Three introduces the reader to Urban Legends. It offers an overview of previous research on the topic and presents the data as well as the context of situation.

⁸ Following the tradition from Folklore studies, I will refer to the individual legends under analysis as ‘samples’ or ‘texts’, reserving the term ‘variants’ for texts which are similar in their plots but present different details.

⁹ The Samples are presented in full, and keeping their original format, including misspellings, capitalizations, overuse of punctuation and typing mistakes in Appendix I. Throughout this dissertation, the samples will be referred to as follows: The number refers to the category which the legend refers to. The letter (A or B) refers to the sample under such category.

Chapter Four presents the lexicogrammatical description of the Urban Legends, focusing on the realization of meaning through the systems of TRANSITIVITY and MOOD and Modality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Chapter Five addresses aspects of representation of social actors, social action and legitimation (Van Leeuwen, 2008).

Chapter Six discusses ULs as social practices and places the most common motifs represented in such texts under the context of Liquid Modernity.

Finally, Chapter Seven revisits the research questions and offers some final considerations. It also discusses possible limitations of this study, pedagogical implications and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this chapter I start by presenting the general principles of Critical discourse Analysis which establish the manner in which language is perceived in the present thesis according to this theory. Next, I concentrate on Systemic Functional Linguistics and on how it can be used as a tool for a Discourse Analysis from a Critical perspective. Finally, I discuss the importance of the sociological component of language and present the social theory which will be used to explore such component in this study.

2.1 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The term ‘critical discourse analysis’ appeared at the end of the 1980’s as an extension of a new research area called critical linguistics, developed at the end of the 1970’s and regarding especially the works of Fowler et al. (1979) and Kress and Hodge (1979). During its evolution, critical approaches to the study of language have been called linguistic criticism (Fowler 1986, 1996), critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992), and critical applied linguistics (Penycook, 2001). However, most scholars interested in the critical study of linguistic practices that convey ideological connotations have, based on the prolific work of Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2001, 2004), adopted the term critical discourse analysis.

The dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure means they are both dependent on and at the same time have an effect upon each other. In other words,

discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels [...]. On the other hand, discourse is socially constitutive. [...] Discourse contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain it: its own norms and conventions, as well as the relations, identities and institutions which lie behind them. Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning. (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64)

As we can see, in CDA language is viewed as an irreducible part of social life, interconnected with several other elements. Consequently, social research must consider language. Because of that, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis offers three levels of discourse analysis corresponding to the three dimensions of discourse: description of the formal properties of the text (social event), interpretation of the relationship between participants (social practice) and explanation of how the two former are placed in the context of social action (social structure). Therefore, in order to fully understand the process of meaning making, "the central concern of a critical discourse analyst [must be] to relate the discourse process of text production and interpretation with social practice" (Caldas-Coulthard, 1997, p. 24).

According to Kress (1989), Fairclough (1992) and Meurer (1997), each individual is inserted in a web of social relations where they act as social agents. Besides, social relations are specific to social groups, which are controlled by institutions that carry their own sets of social practices involving a series of values and expectations. Consequently,

Social events are causally shaped by (networks of) social practices – social practices define particular ways of acting, and although actual events may more or less diverge from these definitions and expectations (because they cut across different social practices, and because of the causal powers of social agents), they are still partly shaped by them. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 25)

Having said so, social practices have a straight influence upon the individuals who are part of social groups, and these practices, along with the expectations they imply, are mostly articulated through language.

In this perspective, genres are defined as semiotic activities, that is, activities of production and interpretation of meaning, which are realized through language and recognized by their function in specific contexts and by their rhetorical organization. Besides, these semiotic actions construe, reconstrue or challenge identities, social relations and ways to represent the world (Fairclough, 1992; Meurer, 2005).

A series of principles that underlie this approach to discourse analysis, all based on the dialectical relationship between language and society is set forth by Fairclough and Wodak (1997). First, because of the belief that social matters have a linguistic and discursive aspect, CDA presents a strong social interest. To critically analyze a text, hence, involves describing it not only in terms of language, but also to interpret

and discuss it in relation to the broader sociocultural processes and structures (Meurer, 2000).

Besides, because texts represent and at the same time help maintain or challenge power relations, one central worry of CDA is the investigation of how language use interferes in relations of power in contemporary society (Fairclough, 1989). This is closely related to the ideological aspect of discourse, and one of the main foci of CDA is to explain how aspects of ideology and power are intertwined. In order to achieve such goal, it is necessary to investigate the production, consumption and social effects of texts.

Since language is a form of social practice, every CDA analysis will unveil traces of complex social routines (Giddens, 1984), and hence, under this perspective, it is necessary to investigate such practices in an attempt to make visible the relations between language and social practices, which tend to be naturalized¹⁰ (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; Meurer, 2002). In a sense, then, CDA also has an emancipatory intent, since it attempts to raise awareness of the fact that discourses have the power to create, reinforce or challenge beliefs, relations and identities or social positions (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995, 2001; Meurer, 2001).

Another principle within CDA is that texts are historically situated, so CDA wants to explain what orders of discourse (structured sets of discursive practices associated to certain social institutions) a text is part of, and what other texts it can be related to, provoke or restrain (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

Additionally, the dialectic relationship between discourse and society is mediated through language, so there is a need to look at how the connections between social processes and discursive processes are characteristically realized in language.

Finally, CDA is interpretive but it also intends to explain the *raison d'être* of texts, their meanings and inter-relations, requiring the consideration of the sociological aspect of language as well.

¹⁰ Fairclough (1989, p. 91), explains naturalization as such: “if a discourse type so dominates an institution that dominated types are more or less entirely suppressed or contained, then it will cease to be seen as arbitrary (in the sense of being one among several possible ways of ‘seeing’ things) and will come to be seen as *natural*, and legitimate because it is simply *the* way of conducting oneself.”

2.2 GENRES AND RHETORICAL MODES

Under a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, genres and rhetorical modes¹¹ are both seen as structured ways of using language to make meaning. However, while genres refer to specific types of texts which are tied to particular networks of social practices (Fairclough, 2003), rhetorical modes are categories that transcend those networks, they refer to structures and textual functions genres can draw upon, mostly recognized as narrative, expository, behavioral/hortatory, and procedural (Longacre, 1983).

Though there are several traditions on the study of genres, they are seen in the present research as ways of interacting through language (Fairclough, 2001), which are characterized in terms of content, form and function (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Rhetorical modes, on their turn, can be differentiated both in terms of their intent, expressed in their notional etic structure, and of their formal surface emic characteristics (Longacre, 1983). In terms of intent, narratives aim at entertainment and at offering information; Expository texts at providing explanations or descriptions; procedural texts at telling 'how-to-do-it'; and Behavioral/hortatory at influencing conduct.

In terms of their formal surface characteristics, narratives can be usually differentiated from other rhetorical modes on the basis that narratives are usually in the first or third person, while procedural texts can employ a non-specific person, or even a third person, depending on its content. Expository discourse, on the other hand is usually in the third person and hortatory in the second person. Besides, narrative texts tend to be actor-oriented, while procedurals focus on a goal, expository texts in the subject-matter and behavioral in the addressee. In terms of time, narratives encode accomplished time, and chronological succession is necessary; chronology is also important for procedural discourses, but not for expository or hortatory types, which are characterized by offering logical relations. Finally, narratives are distinct because they are developed around a plot.

¹¹ As seen in Chapter Two, the fact that ULs rely on a narrative structure is an important aspect in their definition. The discussion of rhetorical modes, hence, will aid in the discussion of ULs as a genre, which, on its turn, will lead to a better understanding of these texts as a social practice and of the differentiation from similar genres of the Internet.

Throughout the years, there have been several attempts to define the formal surface characteristics of narratives. Propp (1968, originally published in Russian in 1928), in studying what he called the morphology of folktales, found thirty-one ‘functions’ – stable and constant elements – which, according to him, should appear always in the same sequence. Barthes (1966; 1977), on the other hand, understood that the functions of narratives are teleological, that is, their intent is to lead the reader to the ultimate intellectual or moral function of the text. Consequently, Barthes proposes an analogous relation between text and discourse, where “a discourse is a long ‘sentence’, just as a sentence is a short ‘discourse’” (Barthes, 1977, p. 83). The critical¹² contribution of Barthes’ narrative studies shows that the interpretation of a text cannot be dissociated from its context, since both producers and interpreters are framed by cultural assumptions.

Following this perspective, Labov (1972) isolated six recurring narrative features, meant to answer underlying questions, where the ordering of elements is not fixed:

1. Abstract - How does it begin?
2. Orientation - Who/what does it involve, and when/where?
3. Complicating Action - Then what happened?
4. Resolution - What finally happened?
5. Evaluation - So what?
6. Coda - What does it all mean?

Labov’s (1972) narrative features have become an important element in the analysis of narrative texts, and even though there have been attempts to simplify his model into an organization following a more basic situation – problem – solution pattern (Hoey, 1979), Labov’s features are still used in more recent narrative studies (see Caldas-Coulthard, 1997; Meurer, 1998). Consequently, Labov’s (1972) narrative elements are used in this study as a tool for the better description of the data, insofar as they aid in the understanding of ULs interdisciplinarily.

However, as noted by Meurer (2000, p. 151), “a textual genre frequently contains more than one rhetorical mode”¹³. Under this perspective, then, genres such as editorials in women’s magazines

¹² Barthes’ contribution is critical in two senses. First, critical meaning important, as it has grounded most of the following studies on Narratives. Second, it is critical as it indicates the relationship between language and context, in agreement with contemporary Critical Language Studies.

¹³ My translation.

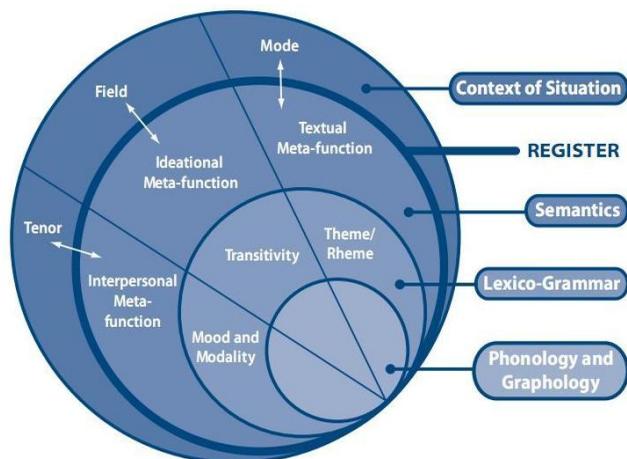
(Heberle, 1997) or self-help books (Meurer, 1998) can both be considered hortatory since they are rhetorically structured with the intent of influencing other people's behavior. Besides, as different genres, each presents a typical rhetorical organization and has a specific function, involving specific social practices (Fairclough, 1992; Meurer, 2000, 2002).

2.3 SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AS A TOOL FOR CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) understands language as “a resource for making meanings” (Halliday, 1978, p. 192); not a set of rules on how to write ‘correct’ sentences, but a culturally shared system we can draw upon with all our creativity in order to better express what we mean: a social semiotic system. This notion is crucial to our discussion first because it brings our attention to the role of language in the negotiation not only of meaning, but also of relationships between interactants. If languages are shared systems, our linguistic choices will depend upon who we are interacting with. It also calls our attention to the fact that different structures express different meanings. Finally, it suggests that learning a language is not memorizing a code, but learning to employ a tool to construct meanings of different kinds. As Christie (2002, p. 13) has noted, “the interest for the SF theorist is in looking at how language users exploit and deploy the language choices to make meanings, for the focus is on language as resource, never as a set of rules.”

SFL then models language and context through different levels of abstraction, also called strata, where phonology and graphology are at the lowest level of linguistic realization followed by lexicogrammar and then by discourse semantics. These linguistic levels are realized in an immediate context of situation (Figure 2.1), which is in turn part of a larger context of culture.

Figure 2.1 Levels of language (From Heberle, V. M., 2011, p. 37, based on Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).



This view means that for the understanding of language in use we must consider the meanings produced by language understood in their immediate context of situation but also taking into consideration that this immediate context is part of a larger one which corresponds to all possible contexts of use in a specific social group. This relationship between texts and contexts is dual – texts are not only constituted by these contexts of use, but they also constitute them. Texts are, consequently, inseparable parts of the meaning making processes in which they are created.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is then both a theory of language and a method for the analysis of texts (Eggins, 2004). Through the use of SFL, one finds the possibility to establish connections between the context of situation, the metafunctions of language and the lexicogrammar involved in the composition of texts. Hence, SFL contributes to the comprehension of the several roles played by language.

First, it is functional, because it considers the semantic function of language, that is, what people ‘do’ with language in order to create meaning. Second, it is systemic, since it sees language as a system of lexical and grammatical options which are instantiated in the meaning-making process. Finally, it looks at the context of situation where meaning is construed. These three dimensions are closely connected, as can be seen in Figure 2.1.

The semantic dimension characterizes the texts created by people in all spheres of human interaction by three metafunctions or types of meanings: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The relationship between the context of situation, semantics and lexicogrammar can be seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Context of situation, semantics and lexicogrammar. (Adapted from Heberle, 2000, p. 297)

CONTEXT OF SITUATION	SEMANTICS	LEXICOGRAMMAR
Context	Language function	Realization at clause level
Semiotic structures of situation	Functional components of semantics	Lexicogrammatical choices
Field of discourse	Ideational meanings	Transitivity structures
Social activity	Ideational content	Clause as representation
Tenor of discourse	Interpersonal meanings	Mood structures
Relation between involved participants	Personal interaction	Clause as exchange
Mode of discourse	Textual meanings	Thematic structures
Channel: symbolic or rhetorical	Textual structure	Clause as message

Ideational meanings refer to the content of a text or to the representation of aspects of the world and of reality in the text. These meanings are determined by the field, the element of the context of situation that tells us what is going on, what the activity taking place is. In lexicogrammatical terms, ideational meanings are realized through the system of TRANSITIVITY. Hence, the field of discourse (context of situation), the ideational function (semantics) and the TRANSITIVITY system (lexicogrammar) complement each other.

Interpersonal meanings are about the relationships that the text establishes between participants in the interaction. These meanings are determined by the interpersonal relationships in the context of situation. They indicate who participates in the discursive event and what their relations of power, status and attitude towards the text are. In lexicogrammar, interpersonal meanings are realized through the structures of MOOD and Modality, and thus, alike ideational meanings, they are also directly interconnected to the context of situation and lexicogrammar.

The textual dimension deals with the rhetorical distribution of elements in the text, allowing the symbolic creation of meanings in the ideational metafunction and the relations in the interpersonal metafunction. Textual meanings are determined by the mode of discourse, another element in the context of situation that is related to the channel through which communication takes place. It may refer to whether the text is oral, written or a mixture of both in contexts such as of the Internet. In lexicogrammatical terms, these meanings are realized through the structures of Theme and Rheme.

Summing up, what can be seen in Table 2.1 is that the ideational meanings, realized by the system of TRANSITIVITY, are directly related to the field, that is, to the ‘goings-on’, those aspects of the context that are related to the content of a text. Also, the interpersonal meanings, realized by the system of MOOD and Modality, refer to the relationships established between participants in the interaction. Besides, the textual meanings, realized by the thematic structure, are related to the demands of mode, that is, the channel of communication. Field, tenor and mode are then the three components of the context of situation which are bi-directly related to the metafunctions of language (the semantic components of texts) which are, in their turn, realized by the lexicogrammatical choices.

Under CDA’s view where texts can create, reproduce or challenge meanings in society (Fairclough, 1989), three types of textual meanings are considered: representational, actional and identificative. Representational meanings are related to the aspects of the world which the text is representing; actional meanings are the interpersonal relations between participants in the interaction; while identificative meanings are the way a text constructs, maintains or challenges social identities.

Similarly, in SFL (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), texts simultaneously fulfill the three previously discussed metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational metafunction corresponds to Fairclough’s representational meanings. It is related to the aspects of the world that are being represented, who the participants involved are and under what circumstances. The interpersonal metafunction is about the relationships constructed between participants and the attitudes and values they attach to their texts. It involves both the actional and identificative meanings considered by CDA. The textual metafunction concerns aspects of the organization of the text, such as cohesion and coherence. Fairclough does not discuss Halliday’s textual metafunction in separate; still, he includes aspects of how the texts interact with social events in what he calls actional meanings.

Consequently, following both perspectives, one can say that languages have a theoretical semiotic potential, but the specific meaning resulting from its use is not embedded in the words and structures themselves – it is constructed by the participants in the interaction.

Similarly to CDA, SFL's stratification relates linguistic features to broader social aspects. The strata involved in meaning making are phonetics, phonology, lexicogrammar, semantics and context (subdivided into context of situation and context of culture). Every time one makes use of language, all these levels are simultaneously accessed (Meurer, 2006). Meanings are realized by lexicogrammatical elements, which in turn are realized by phonology and phonetics. At the same time, the potentials offered by the system of a language are instantiated in the form of texts when the language system meets a specific context of situation.

Due to the focus that SFL places on the interaction between language and the contexts of situation and of culture, “analysis at separate levels becomes meaningless without interpreting the results in the light of other levels” (Lassen, 2004, p. 268). This means that “it is not possible to draw meaningful conclusions on the basis of analyses that explore a single stratum in isolation” (Lassen, 2004, p. 268). The same way a CDA analysis needs to consider the role of language in social events and practices, the textual analysis in SFL must reckon with the contexts of situation and culture where the text is produced. In fact, “the strength of both approaches lies not only in their descriptive capacity, but also in their interpretative ability” (Lassen, 2004, p. 269).

The context of situation, in Systemic Functional Linguistics, can be described through register, that is, through the overall configuration of the system associated with a determined type of context. The register is composed of three variables: field, tenor and mode. Field is the activity being conducted; it is the explanation of what is going on, as in a speech by a presidential candidate. Tenor are the relationships and roles of the participants in the interaction. Following the example of the candidate, the tenor would probably be formal but friendly. Mode is the channel, modality or means used to produce the text. Our candidate would be using his voice, and the channel could be for example the radio.

In order to be able to understand the context of culture, Systemic Functional Analysts work with other social sciences such as Anthropology (in the case of feminist/gender studies, for example) or Sociology. Meurer (2006) suggests we draw on Sociology, more

specifically on Giddens' Structuration Theory to explain the way people structure their social actions in their daily lives.

Even though both CDA and SFL highlight the straight relationship between the texts and broader social aspects, it has been noticed that "when moving from abstract structures towards concrete events, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate language from other social elements" (Fairclough, 2004, p. 115). In order to investigate textual and contextual characteristics of texts, Fairclough (2004) suggests a transdisciplinary work between CDA and SFL, and opposes the idea of an interdisciplinary effort, reminding us that

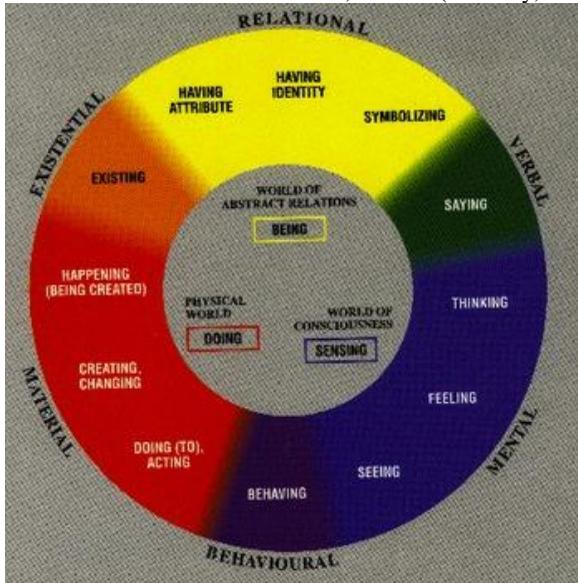
It is not simply a matter of adding concepts and categories from other disciplines and theories, but working on and elaborating one's own theoretical and methodological resources so as to be able to address insights or problems captured in other theories or disciplines from the perspective of one's particular concern. (p. 116)

It seems so that to the analyst interested in explaining both the textual and the more broad social-contextual dimensions of language use, associating the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics as a tool for textual analysis to Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis would be a more thorough approach to the investigation. As Lassen (2004, p. 171) has pointed out, "it becomes possible to integrate SFL and CDA at the text level, combining Fairclough's CDA model with Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions as organizing principles". The incorporation of this kind of analysis "places us in a stronger position to make a substantive contribution to social research" (Fairclough, 2004, p. 120).

2.3.1 THE SYSTEM OF TRANSITIVITY

In Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), the system of TRANSITIVITY treats the clause as a way of representing reality, and hence realizing ideational meanings. The clause is constituted of (one or more) participants, a process and (possibly) circumstances. In the system of TRANSITIVITY, meanings are realized through six different process types: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational and existential, which can be seen in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2 The grammar of experience: types of process in English (From the cover of *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd ed. (Halliday, 1994))



Material processes are processes of doings and happenings that bring about some change in the material world. Mental processes concern the realm of perceptions and feelings or of consciousness. Verbal processes represent ways of saying, that is, exchanges of meaning. Behavioral processes, on their turn, share traits of material, mental and verbal processes, but they need to be carried out by a conscious entity. They resemble material processes in that they can refer to physiological and social processes. They also share semantic characteristics with mental and verbal processes since they can construe the idea sensing or saying but as activities.

Relational processes describe relations between participants by either identifying them or by assigning them Attributes. Similarly, existential processes construe a participant involved in a process of being, though in the case of existential processes, there is only one participant (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Representation of processes (based on Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Type of process	Meaning construed	Examples from the data
Material	Represent doings and happenings that bring about change in the material world.	Whoever this person was, <i>took</i> the little girl, <i>brought</i> her into the bathroom, <i>shaved</i> half her head intending to <i>shave</i> it all, <i>undressed</i> her in less than 10 min.
Mental	Represent the realm of perceptions and feelings.	Ladies, beware at the gas station! The only thing he could <i>think</i> of was [...] James <i>knew</i> that he was doomed.
Verbal	Represents an exchange of meaning.	He <i>told</i> her that something happened [...] The attendant once again <i>urged</i> her [...] The fireman <i>explained</i> that [...]
Behavioral	Represent physiological and social processes.	Grandma <i>passed away</i> in the back seat of the car. If you haven't already <i>heard</i> about it [...]
Relational	Describe relations between participants by assigning them identity or attributes.	<i>Be</i> extra careful! This <i>is</i> real!!
Existential	Construe a participant as existing.	She knew <i>there were</i> others [...] <i>There is</i> a note on the wall [...]

The clause also construes the participants, that is, the people or objects that act or are acted upon in the process. Each type of process is related to different specific participants. Material processes involve an Actor, a Goal, a Recipient and a Scope. Mental processes involve a Senser and a Phenomenon. Behavioral processes involve a Behaver and a Scope. Verbal processes involve a Sayer, a Receiver and a Verbiage. Relational processes may involve a Carrier and an Attribute, in the case of relational attributive processes, or a Token and a Value, in relational identifying processes. Existential processes involve only one Existent.

Circumstances, an element of the clause which is not always present, refer to information about time, space, manner, cause, role, matter, accompaniment or angle of the representation, and are realized by adverbs, adverbials or prepositional phrases.

As such, the TRANSITIVITY system understands that all types of processes are different and have a grammar of their own (considering the various participant functions each is associated with). At the same

time, they all have the same grammar, since they represent one generalized structure (composed of a process, participants and circumstances) common to every clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). These two perspectives complement each other, and allow us to relate the system of the clause to the ideational construal of meanings.

2.3.2 MOOD AND MODALITY

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) approach interaction from a semantic perspective, where turn-taking allows for different speech roles. Language can then be used to give or demand two different kinds of commodity, either information or goods and services. The relationship between speech roles and commodities, and their realization at the clause level are shown in table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Speech Roles and Commodities (based on Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 107)

<i>Speech Role</i>	Commodity Exchanged	
	Information	Goods and Services
<i>Giving</i>	Statement	Offer
<i>Demanding</i>	Question	Command

When giving information, the clause takes the form of a statement, while a demand for information is realized as a question. To give goods and services, on the other hand, we make offers, and to demand goods and services, commands¹⁴. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) refer to exchanges of information as *propositions*, while exchanges of goods and services are referred to as *proposals*.

Information can be affirmed or denied. In this sense, propositions can be argued in terms of their truthfulness, of whether something *is* or *is not*. Between these two extremes, there are different degrees of certainty and usuality. To express these different degrees, clauses are modalized.

Goods and services, on the other hand, can be argued in terms of *do* or *do not*, since the response to the offer or command can either

¹⁴ This is the unmarked realization of the speech functions; the functions can, however, be realized in different forms, even non-linguistic. One can, for example, demand goods by pointing at it or by making a statement such as ‘it is cold in here’ with the intent of leading someone to close the windows. In the data, however, all realizations of speech functions are unmarked.

support or confront them. In between, there are different degrees of obligation and inclination which are referred to as modulation.

Modalization and modulation can be expressed through the use of modal finites and modal adjuncts. Besides, they can assume the form of metaphors of modality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), where the finite or the adjunct are realized as a clause.

The grammar of interpersonal meaning reflects, then, the tenor of discourse. It gives clues as to the relation between interactants, their level of familiarity, attitudes and judgments.

2.3.3 SOCIOSEMANTIC CATEGORIES

Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), following the same view where language and context are interwoven, focuses his study on the strata of semantics and offers a sociosemantic inventory of the representation of meaning, which he relates to specific grammatical and rhetorical realizations based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (2004). In other words, his interest is in how language and context meet in order to construe meanings. Discourses, in van Leeuwen's view,

not only represent what is going on, they also evaluate it, ascribe purposes to it, justify it, and so on, and in many texts these aspects of representation become far more important than the representation of the social practice itself. (2008, p. 6)

In the present study, given my interest in the representation of participants as social actors, social action itself, and on how social action is legitimated in Urban legends, the focus will be on these categories, which will be further examined in the following sections.

2.3.3.1 REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS

Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), in investigating how participants of social practices, that is, social actors, can be represented in discourse, has designed a sociosemantic inventory of such representations and related them to linguistic realizations.

Social actors can be either excluded or included in representations. This is an important aspect for Critical Discourse Analysis, since authors choose which participants to give more or less prominence to, and different representations of a same event may grant agency to different social actors. When excluded, participants can be completely suppressed or backgrounded to a position of less

prominence. Suppression is most commonly realized through passive agent deletion, nominalizations or non-finite clauses functioning as participants in the clause.

Included participants may be lexicogrammatically represented in a greater variety of ways. First, they can be assigned different roles, as *agents* (as Actor in the clause) or *patients* (as Goal in the clause) in relation to specific social actions. They can, also, be *personalized* (treated as a human agent) or *impersonalized* (represented as non-human).

Personalized and impersonalized actors can be *genericized*, treated as part of a group, by the plural without article or by the singular with the definite article. On the other hand, they can also be *specified*, through the use of a numerative. Specified participants can also be *collectivized* by the plural or plural personal pronouns, and hence treated as the group itself.

Included social actors can be *determined* in a variety of ways. They can be *nominalized*, that is, determined specifically by first name, surname or full name which can be accompanied by title, realizing different degrees of formality. They can also be *categorized* according to the functions they share with other people, as for example through marital status, profession or occupation. On the other hand, they can also be *indetermined*, treated as anonymous and unspecific, usually through the use of indefinite pronouns in nominal position. Finally, social actors can also be *abstracted*, that is, represented by means of a personal quality, where commonly an adjective is used as a noun.

2.3.3.2 REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTION

The ways in which social action is represented play an important role in most texts, since they can indicate particular kinds of discourse. Van Leeuwen (2008) presents a descriptive framework for the analysis of the representation of social action, offering six sociosemantic categories: reaction, material and semiotic action, objectivation and descriptivation, deagentialization, generalization and abstraction, and overdetermination. Out of the six, two show great importance for the construal of meaning in Urban Legends: reactions and material action.

Social actors may be involved not only in actions, but also in reactions. According to Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 56), “the question of who is represented as reacting how to whom, or what, can be a revealing diagnostic for critical discourse analysis.” It is so because texts do not distribute reactions equally among the participants, and the attribution of

different reactions (such as emotional reaction as opposed to cognitive reaction) seems to be greatly related to the power each participant holds. Van Leeuwen has found that, “As the power of the social actor decreases, the amount of emotive reactions attributed to them increases” (p.56).

Reactions can be differentiated from actions on the basis of Halliday’s (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004) TRANSITIVITY system. Broadly put, while material, behavioral and verbal processes realize actions, mental processes realize reactions.

Looking at material representations, they can be transactional, in which case the action is extended to another participant (what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) refer to as clauses of ‘doing’), or non-transactional, where the action is constrained to the actor itself (what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) refer to as clauses of ‘happening’). Consequently, Van Leeuwen (2008) also relates this difference to a matter of power: while transactional material actions indicate power over other elements of the world, either other people or objects, non-transactional actions suggest less power.

2.3.3.3 REPRESENTATION OF LEGITIMATION

Van Leeuwen (2008) discusses four major categories of legitimation: authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization and mythopoesis. The author also considers Multimodal legitimation as a minor category, due to his focus on written texts. Such categories can happen separately or more than one at once. According to van Leeuwen (2008, p. 106),

They can be used to legitimize, but also to delegitimize, to critique. They can occupy the largest part of specific instances of text and talk which may hardly refer to what it is that is being legitimized, or they can be thinly sprinkled across detailed descriptive or prescriptive accounts of the practices and institutions they legitimize.

Authorization is the reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law, or persons who have institutional authority. Moral evaluation makes reference to the value systems within a social group. Rationalization draws upon the knowledge society has constructed, and Mythopoesis uses narratives where the outcome of the plot rewards legitimate actions and punish nonlegitimate ones. Besides, Multimodal legitimation can appear in texts composed of different modes, where

images, sounds, and graphs, for example, are also part of the representation.

Authorization happens when someone, socially vested with authority, legitimizes or delegitimizes social action. Our interest then, is on who this person is and why s/he is granted such authority.

Van Leeuwen (2008) discusses six types of personal authorization: personal authority, expert authority, role model authority, impersonal authority, the authority of tradition and the authority of conformity.

Personal authority is vested in people due to their status or role in a particular institution, that is, people who, in a specific social context, can exert power over others. In van Leeuwen's corpus (2008), it is mostly related to children who obey parents and teachers simply because 'they said so'.

Expert authority is vested in people who have expertise on the subject in question. It can be stated explicitly, as in the use of titles (e. g. Prof. Scott believes) or profession (e.g. the doctor said), or even be taken for granted if in a specific context the person is renowned for his/her knowledge of the area (e.g. Halliday in Systemic Functional Linguistics).

Role model authority is vested in members of a peer group or media celebrities that act as opinion leaders. In this case, simply because the role models adopt certain behavior, it legitimizes the same behavior being performed by other people.

Impersonal authority is the authority of laws and regulations. People legitimize behavior when there is a rule, policy, law or otherwise that regulates such social action. In this sense, behavior is legitimized when it follows a set of socially accepted rules or delegitimized when it goes against those same rules.

The authority of tradition refers to social action that for long has been conducted in the same or similar ways. People behave in a certain way or follow specific customs simply because it is the way it has always been done, so "it is then assumed that this will, by itself, carry enough weight to go unchallenged" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 108).

The authority of conformity, on the other hand, is not about acting as it has always been done, but about acting as others are doing. The rationale behind that is simply: because most people are behaving in a certain way, then it cannot be wrong. Van Leeuwen (2008) reminds us that lawmakers tend to follow the same belief, so one can expect behavior legitimized by conformity to, in time, and given the right

circumstances, become legitimized by the impersonal authority of laws or regulations.

Rationalization, “the clearest and most explicit form of legitimation” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 99), legitimizes behavior by reference to institutionalized action. It may state goals, uses and effects of practices or explicitly point to a ‘natural order’ of things.

The justifications for action are frequently based on systems of value. Besides, in cautionary tales the purpose of action may be simply to escape the punishment assigned to those who do not follow the expected behavior. Because of that, Fairclough (2003) has related rationalization both to moral evaluations and to mythopoesis.

Moral evaluations evoke value systems which are taken for granted, and hence naturalize behavior as common sense. They are implicitly linked to discourses of moral value, and according to Van Leeuwen (2008), usually take the form of adjectives such as ‘healthy’ or ‘normal’. Such words “trigger a moral concept, but are detached from the system of interpretation from which they derive, at least on a conscious level.” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 110) These moral concepts, mostly taken as ‘common knowledge’, offer a type of “generalized motive” which is “widely used to ensure mass loyalty” (Habermas, 1976, p. 36 apud. Van Leeuwen 2008, Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough (1989, p. 91) explains:

If a discourse type so dominates an institution that dominated types are more or less entirely suppressed or contained, then it will cease to be seen as arbitrary (in the sense of being one among several possible ways of ‘seeing’ things) and will come to be seen as *natural*, and legitimate because it is simply *the* way of conducting oneself.

Evaluations then become commonsensical as discourses become naturalized. In this sense, evaluations disguise morality behind an assumed ‘natural order’. Van Leeuwen (2008) discusses the evaluative power of adjectives¹⁵. Such force may be implicit in adjectives such as ‘green’ and ‘healthy’, which are taken as ‘good’, or explicit as in ‘natural’ and ‘normal’, but they always legitimize behavior by relating them to specific discourses of moral value.

¹⁵ Even though Van Leeuwen’s (2008) study discusses only evaluative adjectives, as we will see in this study nouns can also carry evaluations and naturalize behavior.

Similarly, mythopoesis legitimates social action through storytelling where characters are rewarded for engaging in socially accepted events and punished for defying the agreed upon legitimate social order. Stories can also allow social actors or actions to be inverted in terms of their specific semantic features. Anthropomorphism or personification can, for example, allow a crude evaluation, and consequent legitimation or delegitimation of social action since the subject under scrutiny is not ‘one of us’.

Multimodal legitimation, on its turn, refers to the use of non-verbal resources, such as visual aids or sounds, as ancillary in the representation of all forms of legitimation which have been previously presented. Mythopoesis, for example, can be construed in the form of comic strips or movies. Role models or authorities can be portrayed visually as engaged in legitimized social practices, and moral evaluations represented by the use of symbols (as for example through the use of a red cross over the image of a cigarette). Van Leeuwen (2008) also reminds us that certain objects carry particular sociocultural connotations, such as teddy bears, which have been shown to symbolize affection (Caldas-Coulthard, 2002).

After briefly discussing van Leeuwen’s sociosemantic categories (1996, 2008) I will now refer to the theoretical concepts which have contributed to my analysis of the sociological components in ULs.

2.4 THE SOCIOLOGICAL COMPONENT OF LANGUAGE

The sociological component of language aids in the description and explanation of the inter-relationships between texts and contexts. As Halliday (1978) points out, social considerations can be revealing. However, he also suggests that for a better understanding of the way in which language is used in specific contexts, the criteria for social analysis must be sociological, that is, based on theories of social structure and social change. The sociological elements to be taken into consideration will be defined in relation to the linguistic object under analysis. If the object is related to feminist studies, for example, the phenomenological perspective may aid in the explanation of the way in which patriarchal world definitions are part of a hegemonic male oriented discourse. Urban Legends, on the other hand, are characteristic of a broad global social context, part of the continuity from a solid to a liquid modernity, and it is the reason why I propose we look at these legends from the perspective of Bauman’s Liquid Modernity (2000,

2001, 2004, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011a, 2011b) which will be further discussed in the next section.

2.4.1 LIQUID MODERNITY

Bauman (2000) coined the term Liquid Modernity to refer to the present human condition, contrasting it to the former *solid* modernity. While the term ‘post-modernity’ seems to imply an *end* to modernity, Bauman (2001) sees this phenomenon as a reorganization of themes and categories. In order to understand this process, one must consider a move from a defined, territorialized and nationalized modernity to a new globalized, nomad and migratory modernity, under the effects (both positive and negative) of the Internet and new technologies, which includes the speed and the reach of information sharing as well as the international openness to the exchange of capital and goods.

While in its solid form, modernity involved control over nature, hierarchy, rules, control and categorization, all in an attempt to organize the chaos of human experience. However, Bauman (2001) argues that such organization was never reached. Even when life is organized into categories, there are always groups that cannot be separated or controlled. One example of that is in what Bauman (1998, 2004, 2006, 2011a), based on the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, calls ‘the stranger’: a person who is present, but is unfamiliar to us. The stranger cannot be controlled or categorized into our (relative) established order, so he/she is object of our fears, the potential criminal, one who is outside the limits of our society but inside the same geographical borders, and hence, a constant threat. In a world where we know our friends and enemies, the threat offered by the stranger is “scarier than what we can fear from our enemy” (Bauman, 1998, p. 157).

In this new condition, social institutions do not have the time and the authority needed to solidify and become references to human action; Traditional institutions, such as the Church, traditional media or even the police have been losing their importance as centers of social control (Bauman, 2001, 2006, 2007). Consequently, individuals need to find new ways to organize their lives. Some traditional concepts, as ‘professional career’, ‘family’ or ‘community’, have lost their characteristic stability and individuals must always be ready to readapt, abandon commitments and follow opportunities based on their current situation. Hence, in Liquid Modernity, humans need to plan their actions in a condition of constant uncertainty, and insecurity and fear become the leading elements of social life.

Globalization has been responsible for a series of changes related to this overall feeling of insecurity. One important aspect is the separation between power and politics. While politics and policies remain local, power has become globalized (Bauman, 2007). The information society and the international openness to the exchange of capital and goods leads to a global concern with the ‘others’, since any event in the world has the potential both to be known and to have economic influence all over the globe. This intellectual and material openness has dismantled boundaries, and

it now brings to most minds the terrifying experience of a heteronomous, hapless and vulnerable population confronted with, and possibly overwhelmed by forces it neither controls nor fully understands; a population horrified by its own undefendability and obsessed with the tightness of its frontiers and the security of the individuals living inside them (Bauman, 2007, p. 7)

Paradoxically, the concept of ‘community’ has been losing its meaning.

‘Society’ is increasingly viewed and treated as a ‘network’ rather than a ‘structure’ (let alone a solid ‘totality’): it is perceived and treated as a matrix of random connections and disconnections and of an essentially infinite volume of possible permutations. (Bauman, 2007, p. 3)

Because in Liquid Modernity the changes are frequent and fast, the value of long-term planning and acting accordingly has weakened, turning individual lives into a series of short-term projects that come up as a response to the different opportunities one faces, each requiring a different set of skills or distribution of assets.

Identity, in this situation, becomes a matter of uniqueness, “and so the search for identity cannot but divide and separate” (Bauman, 2001, p.16). Because of that, the concept of ‘identification’ assumes a new relevance. According to Hall (2000, p. 106), identification is construed “from the recognition of a common origin, or from characteristics that are shared with other groups or people, or even from a shared ideal”. In other words, individual identity is defined from the notions of who we are and who the others are; identification, on the other hand, is what connects us to other people. This concept of identity leads us to comparisons about the cultural resources which are valued by ourselves and the other subjects. This valorization is only relatively

stable, though, so that there might be changes in what we consider to be our individual identities in different moments of our lives, as well as in what groups we choose to associate/identify with. Hence, the groups we associate with are created and dismantled according to our momentary identities. As Hall (2003, p. 13) has put it, identity is “formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways in which we are represented or interpellated by the cultural systems around us.”

Collective identity, then, is an event, and not a natural effect of the social world; it refers to the adherence to a cultural model that incorporates certain rituals, practices and artifacts. Just like the individual identities, the collective identity is also defined by the differentiation from other groups. However, the border between different collective cultural identities is not geographical; it rests on the cultural items that are more or less valued: “The centers of meaning and value production are today extraterritorial and emancipated from local restrictions” (Bauman, 1999, p. 9). The collective cultural identity, as we can see, also leaves space for constant change, which can happen through innovation, expansion, transference of meaning, authenticity fabrication or modernization (Gimenez, 2009).

Most of these changes have a starting point in cultural hybridization. The circulation of cultural elements outside their original geographical borders is not new. Only nowadays it happens faster due to improvement in human mobility and intercultural contacts. This hybridization, however, does not result in only one global hybrid culture. In order to maintain our own identities (which as discussed before are established with basis on difference) such relations are structured so that cultural differences do not cease to exist. According to Featherstone (1994, p. 8),

the binary logic that tries to understand culture through mutually exclusive terms such as homogeneity/heterogeneity, integration/disintegration, unity/diversity must be discarded.

On that account, the same subject can bond with different cultures at once without losing his/her original cultural reference. Even if television shows, advertisements, culinary recipes and *narratives*, among others, can cross the globe in a matter of seconds, the answer of those individuals who receive such cultural items is not uniform, since each will do it from different contexts and social practices (Featherstone, 1994).

These dissolutions of the community, of the traditional social institutions and of the political controlling power take responsibilities that were once communal and place them on the hands of the individual, who needs to conform less to pre-established rules and take control over their own lives, choices and security.

All these characteristics lead to a social situation where individuals are both dealing with constant uncertainty and, more than ever, responsible for their own security. This situation, on its turn,

brings to most minds the terrifying experience of a heteronomous, hapless and vulnerable population confronted with, and possibly overwhelmed by forces it neither controls nor fully understands; a population horrified by its own undefendability and obsessed with the tightness of its frontiers and the security of the individuals living inside them (Bauman, 2007, p. 7)

Fear becomes self-propelling. Since the object of an individual's fear is not clear anymore, people tend to look for protection in all fronts. Fencing your windows, carrying a gun or spreading bogus warnings (such as those in ULs) however only reproduces the feeling of chaos and insecurity they were meant to prevent. According to Bauman (2007, p. 9), "Fears prompt us to take defensive action. When it is taken, defensive action gives immediacy and tangibility to fear." The problem is that these actions reaffirm and help reproduce the insecurity they were meant to prevent.

In Liquid Modernity, then, individuals must plan their actions in a condition of constant uncertainty. Thus, I believe the use of this theory will help me analyze how ULs are socially used as a collective way to make meaning, to reinforce prevailing ideologies, or, as it seems, propagate the fears and beliefs of the community where these stories are continuously (re-)told or (re-)sent.

In sum, based on the previously mentioned concepts and categories from CDA, SFL and the sociological component of language, the following are the main theoretical aspects that inform my data analysis: a) ideational and interpersonal meanings in verbal language by means of the system of TRANSITIVITY and MOOD and Modality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004); b) social action *vis-à-vis* discourse, ideology and power (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995, 2003; van Leeuwen 1996, 2008), as well as c) identity and cultural representation (Bauman, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2007).

CHAPTER 3

URBAN LEGENDS

The present chapter intends to present an overview of the most common aspects in Urban Legends (ULs) as well as to introduce the categories of Legends and the samples which this study will focus on. Besides, some of the characteristic features in this type of narratives, such as context, plausibility, variability and function will be further discussed in order to clarify the difference between ULs and other related genres such as myths and rumors.

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO URBAN LEGENDS

Urban Legends (ULs) are a type of legend, a subclass of folklore (Brunvand, 1981). The very meaning of '*folklore*' indicates two important aspects of ULs. First, it refers to some sort of knowledge - '*lore*' - which is being transmitted from one person to another. Second, such knowledge is shared by a '*folk group*' that makes use of folkloric communicative events (as legends, proverbs, jokes and ballads, for example) to maintain and reinforce its traditional lore.

Urban legends have been defined as narratives that contain themes related to the modern world (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Berenbaum, 2001; Brunvand, 1981, 1984, 1993, 2002), of contemporary and localized events (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Donovan, Mowen and Chakraborty, 1999; Brunvand, 2002; Genge, 2000) and that contain moral implications (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Donovan, Mowen and Chakraborty, 1999; Brunvand, 2002, 1993, 1981, 1984; Genge, 2000; Brednich, 2002; Harding, 2005). These stories are told as facts that have actually happened (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Brednich, 2002; Berenbaum, 2001; Brunvand, 1993; 2002; Genge, 2000) and they present variations in several different places and times (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Donovan, Mowen and Chakraborty, 1999; Brunvand, 1993; 2002; Genge, 2000). While most authors agree that ULs can be stories of unusual, humorous or horrible events (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Donovan, Mowen and Chakraborty, 1999; Berenbaum, 2001; Brunvand, 1981; 1993; 2002, Genge, 2000), a few scholars, such as Dale (2005), argue that because such stories are meant to be believed, they are most often "unpleasant or ghastly" (p. 34), even when they do present some kind of ironic twist.

Because ULs are a narrative form, they appear in contexts where meaning is made through storytelling (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Brunvand, 1981), where sharing stories function as a “social bonding device” (Harding, 2005, p. 12), or as Meurer (1998, p. 40) suggests, narratives serve as “a community-building device”, since “we all make sense of our lives by constantly constructing narratives” (Meurer, 1998, pp. 23-24). On that account, Urban Legends are “stories [that] bring security – a shared experience and a communality that helps us all deal with the wider world” (Harding, 2005, p. 12).

However, such stories can also delude us and encourage misconceptions:

Urban legends are narratives, which put our fears and concerns into the form of stories, which we use to confirm and indeed reinforce the ‘rightness’ of our worldview, biased as that may be. (Harding, 2005, p. 32)

In this context, Urban Legends can function as a means of instruction, especially in the realm of morality (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Donovan, Mowen and Chakraborty, 1999; Brunvand, 2002; 1981; 1993; Genge, 2000; Brednich, 2002; Harding, 2005), becoming, thus “a medium through which important ideas are transmitted from one generation to the next, similar in many aspects to fairy tales in which sub-textual meanings are hidden” (Harding, 2005, p. 16). Accordingly, such stories can be presented as a type of warning (Dale, 2005), or cautionary tales (Harding, 2005). As such, “they warn us against engaging in risky behaviours by pointing out what has supposedly happened to others who did what we might be tempted to try” (Harding, 2005, p. 33). Besides, because of their apparent seriousness of purpose, Urban Legends work as an almost legitimate means to raise taboo or unpleasant topics (Dale, 2005), and hence they reflect the fears, hopes and anxieties of individuals in the societies where they circulate (Brunvand, 1981; 1993; Berenbaum, 2001).

In order to maintain their perceived and necessary plausibility, since “the durability of Urban Legends rests in their superficial credibility – they could after all be true” (Harding, 2005, p. 13), ULs present variations in terms of who the protagonist is and where and when the related events take place. Such aspects tend to be adapted to fit the localized context of the teller and its audience. First, there is some type of personal involvement between the teller and the protagonist of the story, which functions as a way to secure invulnerability: “the affectation of kinship with the protagonist of the story both lends

verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative, and protects the teller” (Dale, 2005, p. 38). Second, “the storytellers will use locations specific to them which are guaranteed to provoke an immediate response of horror in their eager listener” (Harding, 2005, p. 24). And finally, because ULs are contemporary in nature, there are usually references to the fact that the reported events are recent.

Our belief in their superficial credibility is also frequently supported by their retelling in the popular media, which has often become “a willing participant in their propagation, reporting the incidents as real-life events rather than fiction” (Harding, 2005, p. 15). Even though the vast majority of such tales are invented, a few have been tracked back to real life incidents, but “whether or not something actually happened has no bearing on its status as an Urban legend” (Harding, 2005, p. 43). In most cases, though there might indeed have been an original actual event, it could not possibly have happened to as many people or in as many places as the several variants of the same legend would make us believe.

One example of this is the classic Urban Legend ‘The Mouse in the Coke Bottle’, a food contamination story involving a famous brand name. Harding (2005) was able to track down a few records of cases of dead mice found in soda bottles in North American courts between the years 1914 and 1976, so one can conclude that at least some ULs are based on real-life events. However, the variations of the legend report different circumstances when the mouse is discovered and refer to so many different subjects, places and times that the only ‘truth’ behind it might be in the fact that it is possible¹⁶. Having said so, the truth of an Urban Legend is not on the reported facts, but in its values and cultural significance:

what must be taken as true is that the stories themselves tend to be a subconscious (sometimes conscious) reflection of the concerns of the individuals in the societies in which the legends circulate and evolve. (Harding, 2005, p. 17)

Stories about teens in peril, for example, usually do not have any basis on reality. They do, however, warn teenagers to stay away from

¹⁶ Noteworthy, while I was finishing the writing of this dissertation, in September 2013, the same story of a mouse in a Coke bottle resurfaced in Brazil through the report of a man who supposedly got mobility difficulties after ingesting Coca-Cola from a bottle that contained a mouse in it. Almost a hundred years after the first known report of the story, the recent case comes to reinforce the cultural significance of the theme.

dangerous situations and to limit their activities to defined parental boundaries (Harding, 2005). In this sense, Urban legends play with our fears, and “when a nation is fearful its Urban Legends increase in frequency to reflect that” (Harding, 2005, p. 17). The World Trade center tragedy has worked both to adapt extant legends to suit the growing paranoia and also to enable new legends to appear. After the real event, the dissemination of body contamination stories might have increased since “a fear of the outsider¹⁷ – ‘the terrorist’- is already a deep-rooted psychological condition in present day United States” (Harding, 2005, p. 31), while a series of new ‘Terrorist Warn Legends’ have appeared.

These narratives usually tell us of a mysterious stranger thanking someone for the return of a lost wallet, and then warning them not to be at the World Trade Center in the morning of the attack. Stories such as this cannot survive by adaptation to other locations, since they are sourced to a specific tragedy. On the whole, however:

the story will always have the appearance of being the truth and the location will always be somewhere known and, more often than not, in the immediate vicinity of teller and listener. The endangered protagonists are usually nameless but they are the kinds of people that are recognizable (sometimes stereotypically) to those telling and to those listening to the legend. (Harding, 2005, p. 24)

However clear the term ‘Urban legend’ might seem from the discussion presented so far, it has been widely accepted and redefined by the general public and mass media to include all types of misinformation. Because ULs are generally untrue, they frequently get confused with myths, and references to ‘urban myths’ are not uncommon. The term ‘myth’ is in itself a great source of confusion due to its own different definitions. Traditionally, myths are also a type of narrative, “set in a ‘distant past’ and involve the activities of gods, goddesses and other supernatural beings from angels to Minotaurs” (Harding, 2005, p. 29). In this sense, they are different from ULs since the latter

are set in the recent past and have normal people, in everyday, often banal, environments as their

¹⁷ This ‘fear of the outsider’, frequently referred to by folklorists, will be further discussed in Chapter 6, where I intend to relate the common themes in Urban Legends to the context of Liquid Modernity.

protagonists. They are quasi-folk history gaining their credibility from the use of real places, known products and other modern elements that are easily recognizable and to which importance and therefore a high level of believability can be attached. (Harding, 2005, p. 29)

More recently, though, myths have been accepted by the general public as a type of lie to be debunked, and that is the reason why Urban Legends have also been called urban myths. This second definition might have originated from a misunderstanding of the work of Roland Barthes, 'Mythologies', first published in 1957. For Barthes, myths serve the function of naturalizing the ideological interests of the bourgeoisie (Barthes, 2010). Their function is to naturalize the cultural - in other words, to make dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs seem 'natural' or 'commonsensical' - and thus, objective and 'true' reflections of the world. The myth for Barthes is not on the *signifier* or the *signified* themselves, it is a matter of *connotation*. Hence, the mythical connotation can derive from any type of *signifier*, including, but not in any way restricted to, narratives. So, while the popular usage of the term myth assumes that it refers to beliefs which are demonstrably false, in Barthes' sense they can be better explained as metaphors. Like metaphors, myths help us make sense of our experiences within a culture; they serve to organize shared ways of conceptualizing meaning.

If we consider Barthes' definition of myth, then ULs do have a mythological aspect. Their circulation, as we will see in the following sections, is deeply rooted in the transmission of cultural values and beliefs. However, calling Urban Legends 'urban myths' would be a stretch too far. While in Barthes' sense a myth *derives* from the text but is not the text itself, the popular usage of the word would also restrict the narratives included in the category only to those without any origin in real facts, and, as has been previously discussed, that is not always the case with Urban Legends.

3.2 URBAN LEGENDS AS FOLKLORE

Urban Legends are a widespread phenomenon moving through cultures and time the same way songs, fairy tales and myths have always done, only now they can move instantaneously around the world with a few clicks on a screen. Easily transferable from one culture or language to another, they are part of a "global village which, at least partly, shares the same wishes, longings, values and anxieties" (Brednich, 2002, p. 1).

Before the advent of the Internet, it was believed ULs could not survive without its oral tradition: “It might seem unlikely that legends – *urban*¹⁸ legends at that – would continue to be created in an age of widespread literacy, rapid mass communications, and restless travel.” (Brunvand, 1981, p. 1) However,

the corollary rule of stability in oral tradition is that all items of folklore, while retaining a fixed central core, are constantly changing as they are transmitted, so as to create countless ‘variants’ differing in length, detail, style, and performance technique. (Brunvand, 1981, p. 3)

Time has shown that both the new ULs of the age of the Internet and the Legends from oral tradition that have been translated to the written form maintain all such characteristics. Every time a person re-sends an e-mail message containing an UL, s/he has the opportunity to edit such text as to localize the event, exclude or include any items considered valuable.

Besides, another strong indication that legends in both channels should be understood as the same genre is that whenever legends assume a written format, be it in e-mails or when the print media publishes them as factual, these new texts tend to maintain some characteristics of the oral tradition such as repetition, the use of interjections and speech markers (Brunvand, 1981).

Because of that, authors such as Brednich (2002), Donavan, Mowen, and Chakraborty (1999) and Brunvand (2002) have migrated from studying the oral tradition to studying the e-mail format legends assuming the latter to be a development from the first, but still the same genre. Also, these same studies have shown that the Internet age legends maintain the same functions as ULs in oral tradition.

One characteristic that, at a first glance, might appear to have been lost in this development, though, is the FOAF structure. In 1976, Dale coined the term FOAF as an acronym for ‘a friend of a friend’ (Dale, 2005), since most such stories were reported to have happened to someone not directly known by the teller, but at a close enough distance so that its believability could be kept (Brunvand, 1981; 1993; Harding, 2005):

The narrator will always say that they heard the story from a ‘friend of a friend’ or ‘a friend of a cousin of mine’ or any number of combinations thereof. This *Relative Chain* is nearly always

¹⁸ Author’s emphasis.

missing in the media, particularly in newsprint, but will often be present if an interviewee is asked to describe an event. (Harding, 2005, p. 24)

One could argue, however, that the FOAF structure has not been completely lost. The e-mail format legends are mostly presented as re-sent e-mails, which might be assumed to fulfill the same purpose of distancing the report from the ‘real’ facts just enough. Our friend is re-sending us the message sent by his/her friend, so even though the text does not state that in words, the very nature of re-sent e-mails indicates the story happened to ‘a friend of a friend’.

The acceptance and consequent study of contemporary Internet age ULs as an evolution of ULs in oral tradition distances us from their onset, though, and as it has been noticed, “one of the great mysteries surrounding Urban Legends concerns their origin points” (Harding, 2005, p. 27). Several scholars (Harding, 2000; Brednich, 2002; Genge, 2000) have tracked such stories around the world but usually no single source or location can be found. Exceptions are *fixed point* stories, those where the location is immutable due to its source (Harding, 2005), as is the case of the stories surrounding the Twin Towers which were previously discussed. Urban legends “change, shift and alter elements in an adaptive process so that no amount of research can pinpoint an exact location or place in time where the Legend first came to life.” (Harding, 2005, p. 27)

Only a few legends can be traced back to their onset. Some ULs may begin as nothing more than rumors born from a misinterpretation of phenomena or a half-heard set of circumstances wrongly assessed and passed on as a factual event or series of events. (Harding, 2005, p. 27)

In 1947, American aviator Kenneth Arnold described something he saw over Mount Rainier as ‘moving as a saucer would’, skipping over water. After World War II, the testing of secret German aircrafts and technology was seen and spread by uninformed witnesses (Harding, 2005). Suddenly, a series of misinterpretations of natural celestial events followed, creating a large variety of UFO (Unidentified Flying Objects) Legends, many still in vogue nowadays and cross-referencing with other common UL contents, such as Legends about Governments, Horror Legends and Sex and Scandal Legends. As we have seen,

true stories become legends, legends are debunked, and other tales grow into legends, but the veracity of the legend itself is seldom the whole point. Legends grow based on their

emotional impact, on the lessons the audience believes they have taken from the story. (Genge, 2000, p.107)

Because of the importance of the emotional impact for the dissemination of legends, they tend to have a cyclical nature. ULs about teens in peril, for example, were common in the 1960's, most likely as a reaction to the liberal attitudes of that time. These narratives almost disappeared in the 1970's and 1980's, but re-emerged in the beginning of the 1990's, seemingly as a direct response to the growing fears surrounding AIDS (Harding, 2005).

In search for the onset of specific legends, some authors have turned to looking at possible origins in literature. Brednich (2002), following this new approach to folkloristics, has tracked the origins of the UL 'The Gucci Kangaroo' to the work of Australian author Ron Edwards, 'Yarns and Ballads of the Australian Bush'. Told as an Australian bush yarn, it is a funny tall tale about a kangaroo that ends up escaping with a large sum of money from tourists after an accidental encounter. Told as an UL, with additional details – the German/American tourists accidentally ran the kangaroo over, decided to dress its dead body up in a Gucci jacket and take some pictures alongside it until the animal wakes up and runs away with the jacket and several important elements such as money and documents in its pockets – it can be regarded as a 'true' story and hence assumes the format of an Urban Legend.

Most usually, though, ULs are the result of what is called "communal re-creation" (Brunvand, 2002, p. 83), a process in which each teller re-creates the plot from a particular set of details he/she remembers. This way, each teller will add, drop or change the pieces of information, keeping the story alive and dynamic. Thus, different legends can also become embroidered and intermingled. In a classic experiment, 32 stories were told to 50 participants. Six months later, the participants were interviewed and asked if they could remember any of the stories. The result was they narrated new stories, compounds of pieces of the stories in the original list with pieces of other stories the participants knew (Dale, 2005).

Such re-creations can take place at different levels. At its simplest, it is the protagonist that changes: "by claiming the friendship, the teller draws his tale one step nearer to reality" (Dale, 2005, p. 39); on the same plane, and with the same objective of giving credibility to the tale, the place where the incident happened suits the context of the teller. At other levels, the plot itself becomes modified to suit the

previous experiences of the teller and its audience, so events in the original can be dropped and new information added, giving rise not only to variations but also to new legends.

3.3 THE CONTEXT OF SITUATION OF URBAN LEGENDS

As we have seen, Urban Legends present quasi-unbelievable stories and create a friendly relationship with the receiver, both strategies being vital for the maintenance of such stories. In the next sections, I will discuss the configurations of field, tenor and mode (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) in the texts under analysis.

3.3.1 FIELD

This section examines the topics of the full corpus of urban Legends and then considers the various patterns detected that indicate an ideologically motivated selection. Field is hence examined in what it pertains to representations of fear and insecurity and also to representations of the victims more specifically.

The data set of ULs (Appendix I) consists mostly of reports of threats, which can be related to violent events, bodily contamination or scams. Thirteen out of the total twenty texts offer some kind of explicit warning to the reader concerning ways in which s/he could avoid falling victim of the threat. Samples which do not explicitly express warnings can also be considered to have a cautionary intent, though, since narratives have been found to have a unifying, community building characteristic that can bring members together against potential threats (Caldas-Coulthard, 1997; Meurer, 1998; Toolan, 1988). Such threats refer, in all of the samples, to the vulnerability of one's body or of the social structure. Fourteen out of the twenty samples make reference to the inattention of the victims, who could have avoided the threat if they had been more careful in the conduction of their daily social activities.

The nature of the social activities reported is not only non-institutionalized, but as a whole they are chaotic. The threats can range from specific encounters with strangers, being alone, at night or in public spaces, general submission of individuals to unreliable social structures, to the less palpable vulnerability of the human body to suffer contamination, incapacitation and death.

Since subjects and themes in ULs frequently overlap, Brunvand (1993) proposes an organization based on content, which will be followed in this study given the author's position as the most prolific collector and researcher of Urban Legends, both in oral and written format. The following sections will present an overview of previous studies on each of these content matters, as follows: legends about automobiles, legends about animals, horror legends, accident legends, sex and scandal legends, crime legends, business and professional legends, legends about governments, celebrity legends and academic legends.

3.3.1.1 LEGENDS ABOUT AUTOMOBILES

The role of the automobile in Urban Legends is culturally significant. For a young adult, access to a car allows time away from the family home and a new-found freedom. For a middle-class family, it represents escape from the watching eyes of neighbors (Brunvand, 1981)¹⁹. Because of that, the legendary lore of automobiles is extensive. Such ULs may concern simple mishaps, accidents or car-related crimes.

The first sample in this study (Appendix I – 1A), under the subject 'Ladies beware at the gas station', has been widely known to researchers as 'The killer in the backseat' or 'The assailant in the backseat' (Brunvand, 1981, 1998, 2002; Toropov, 2001). It tells us the story of a lady who stops at the gas station to get gas. The attendant insists she comes inside, alleging there was a problem with her credit card transaction. The lady suspects but follows him inside to be warned by the attendant that a man has climbed into the back of her car. She turns around just in time to see the assailant leave her vehicle. It is then explained that there is a new gang initiation ritual where gang members are required to bring back a female body part.

Stories about criminal gang initiation rituals related to cars abide. Brunvand (2002) reports different versions of this story being told since at least 1964. Such legends circulate "because people are willing to be convinced that the Other is lurking on the next unfamiliar street." (Toropov, 2001, p.168), and consequently, "Legends like this often

¹⁹ It is important to notice here that Brunvand discussed the cultural significance of automobiles in the 1980's. After the study I present here, I suggest such significance might have changed, a topic I will return to in my final considerations.

implicitly lament the passing of the era of civility” (Toropov, 2001, p.168).

Toropov (2001) has also noticed that this near-disaster formula is quite common in ULs, and that “Somehow, hearing about someone *just barely escaping* the fiendish slasher is more terrifying than simply hearing that someone was actually done in” (p.169).

The second sample under this category (Appendix I – 1B), ‘Grand(ma) larceny’, has also been around since before the advent of the Internet. The plot is that a family travels on vacation, and while in a remote area, grandma dies in the backseat of the car. The family wraps the corpse in a blanket and ties it to the roof of the vehicle. The journey follows until they reach a service station, where they stop to call authorities. While the whole family is inside making the call, the car gets stolen – along with grandma.

Brunvand collected the first example of this legend in The United States in 1966, but refers to the work of English scholars who reported it in 1960. Brunvand (1981) studied several different versions of this same story and suggests the central message in this legend is the rejection of death in what he calls a “youth-oriented society” (p.119). The main problem for the family would be disposing of the body, especially due to their distance from home ground. Consequently, “When an unlucky stranger solves the problem, the family feels relief and release from the tension of confronting the graphic reminder of their own mortality.” (Brunvand, 1981, pp. 112-113)

This same idea can be noticed in the sample used for this study. First, the reaction of the grandchildren is to become ‘hysterical’ to the sight of death. Also, the decision to tie the corpse to the roof, thus attributing different spaces for the dead and the alive, is made without any hesitation.

3.3.1.2 LEGENDS ABOUT ANIMALS

Animals tend to be either inherently attractive, as is the case with puppies, cats and bunnies or repellent as rats, snakes and alligators (Toropov, 2001). That means animals are already rich in associations, which can be either positive or negative. Besides, such associations are usually culturally determined. Spiders, for example, are frequent subjects in horror and body invasion legends:

most people harbor no great love for arthropods of any description and are thus more than willing to believe the worst about them, making them ideal

subjects for urban legends. (Berenbaum, 2001, p. 4)

While one characteristic of the traditional legends is anthropomorphism – the attribution of human qualities to animals and inanimate objects – in ULs the animals do not necessarily acquire human abilities but are meant to indicate problems and challenges faced by human beings (Toropov, 2001).

In its various versions, alligators end up in the sewer system of large cities in the ‘Alligators in the Sewer’ stories. The animals themselves do not acquire human characteristics, but do pin point the fact that many humans do not have a responsible attitude towards the pets they bring home.

Animals also appear frequently in stories involving the fear of outsiders. As the alligators, animals are usually a gift or souvenir from another land. Brought home, the pet becomes an object of horror, and a reminder that unfamiliar people and cultures should not be trusted (Toropov, 2001). The same happens to the cute puppy a lady brings home from vacation in Mexico – only to find out it is a very large breed of rat – in ‘the Mexican Pet’ story.

Venomous creatures also appear as frequent visitors of amusement parks. There are accounts of snakes in the tunnel of love, and of scorpions and spiders in roller coaster and bumping car rides. Usually, they have nested in the rides during their constructions abroad or during winter (Brunvand, 2002).

A series of bodily invasions are also assigned to animals in ULs. The man who travels to the Amazon jungle on vacation dies a few months later and doctors find out his brains have been eaten by a Brain Eating Bug; the teenage girl who does not wash her hair so she can have a sky-high Beehive Hairdo ends up eaten by the spiders who nested in her hair.

In the first sample of legends about animals in this study (Appendix I -2A) ‘Spiders under toilet seats’, several victims end up dying without apparent explanation. It is later discovered they had all either visited the same restaurant or been in airplane flights originated in South America. Investigation follows and nests of a killer spider are found under the toilet seats both in the restaurant and in such airplanes. The fear of the outsider is here clear in this indication of the origin of the spiders: South America. Besides, Toropov (2001, p. 269) suggests: “The surrealistic profusion of legends with bugs that infest careless young women while they aren’t looking suggests there may be some sexual subtheme at work in these stories.”

What all legends about animals have in common is the fact that the horrors described are usually not result of the animals' actions, but of the lack of care humans dedicate to them or to keeping away from them. In a different legend, 'the Poodle in the Microwave', where the chosen animal is a more attractive one, the dog is victim of its owner's ignorance of what microwaves can or cannot do when the human decides to dry the puppy up in the device.

However, animals in ULs can appear as heroes too. In the second sample (Appendix I – 2B), 'This is a true story which happened on 9-11-01', it is a guide dog that saves the lives of over nine hundred people during the disaster. The story reports the heroic acts of the dog until it is carried out of the collapsing building by a firefighter. The dog is seriously injured but survives to receive a medal of honor from the city of New York.

In this legend, anthropomorphism can be noticed, for example, when the dog has 'tears in her eyes' at the moment the owner lets her go, or when she 'leads' people out of the building. This may point to a human dilemma: saving own life or helping other people? And it also reminds us of the old saying that 'the dog is a man's best friend' – and may be even more friendly than fellow humans.

3.3.1.3 HORROR LEGENDS

Every category of Urban Legends in fact contains elements of horror, so to classify some as 'horror legends' is quite arbitrary. Different collectors will fit different stories under this heading, but the category remains to highlight those legends that seem to have horror as their main theme (Brunvand, 2002). Such stories tell us of atrocities, gruesome deaths, cannibalism, satanic rituals and terrifying experiences.

Horror legends have frequently been transferred to the screen in thriller movies and hence tend to be the most recognizable type of legends. These films are popular because they play with our fears, but, the same way Urban Legends in written or oral format do, they also provide a "safety net of distance, which offers us catharsis and a release valve for our fears" (Harding, 2005, p. 129). Hollywood has explored legends in a series of movies, such as *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, *Ring*, *Candyman*, *28 Days Later* and the sequels *Scream*, *Halloween* and *Urban Legend*, just to name a few. However, horror movies themselves have also ended up being subject to ULs, as in the story of the mystery deaths of the cast in the film *Poltergeist* or in the supposedly visible ghost on the screen of *Fargo*.

One of the best known examples in this category is the ‘Kidney Theft’ legend, which has been extensively portrayed in movies including *The Harvest* and *Turistas*, which were dedicated entirely to explore such legend. In our sample, entitled ‘Neighbors, beware’ (Appendix I – 3B), the criminal meets a business traveler at a bar and they share a drink. The victim wakes up in a hotel room bathtub, submerged in ice, and finds out both his/her kidneys have been harvested. In its various versions, the criminal is always a stranger, the victim is usually not on home ground, and most often the victim embarks in a sexual adventure with the criminal. It reminds us of the old warning ‘don’t talk to strangers’ and, underneath the horror, we can clearly see two motifs: the fear of the outsider and the lack of sexual control.

The other sample under this category, ‘Wash before wearing’ (Appendix I – 3A) tells the story of a (supposedly North American) anthropologist, who, upon returning from a trip to South America, finds her breasts infected by larvae that are ‘feeding of the fat, tissue and even milk canals of her bosom’. The horror is intensified by an alleged picture of her infected breast which accompanies the e-mail (Figure 3.1). Accordingly, our sample warns: ‘this is not for the weak’.

Figure 3.1 Alleged image of breast infestation by Larvae



Once again, the common motifs of the fear of the outsider and of bodily invasions are present. In reference to traditional legends dated back to the nineteenth century, where a snake would enter a person’s body and grow inside the new organism, Folklorists have adopted the term ‘the bosom serpent’ to refer to any legends where living creatures

invade the human body (Brunvand, 2002). Because it is usually the female body that gets infested, it has been suggested that such legends may represent fantasies or fear of pregnancy (Brunvand, 2002) or that there might be a sexual subtheme to them (Toropov, 2001).

It has also been noticed that Horror legends tend to associate a daily, uneventful act – in our samples, drinking at a bar or the use of underwear – to gross results. That way, every time someone thinks about performing such act, the person will remember the horrid association (Toropov, 2001). Hence, such stories live on.

3.3.1.4 ACCIDENT LEGENDS

Accident legends include “stories about dangerous mishaps that are gruesome or hilarious (sometimes both); almost always they are bizarre” (Brunvand, 2002, p. 4). Such stories tell us about butane lighters exploding inside the car or in a pocket, contact lenses being welded to the cornea, a husband blowing off an exploding toilet, stomachs exploding from the ingestion of candies and the like.

Babies and kids are frequently killed or injured in accident legends. In this case, the accidents are usually the result of the inadvertent neglect from parents, older siblings or baby-sitters. These stories may then reflect “feelings of guilt about modern child-care practices” (Brunvand, 2002, p. 26).

However, sometimes the event is not an accident *per se*, but a murder that happens due to neglect. In one of our samples (Appendix I – 4A), ‘urgent prayer request’, an unlucky family receives news that the older child, a University student living away from home, has been killed. In a hurry to drive to the airport, the father ‘accidentally’ runs over and kills the younger child.

One of the reasons for the power of this legend is that the elements are common in everyday life. The setting is a family home and the protagonists are the family members. According to Brunvand (2002),

narratives of all kinds require some degree of conflict and uncertainty, thus, the modern stories about children at risk merely exaggerate some typical plot situations partly drawn from real life. (p. 69)

In doing so, they bring the story closer to the reader’s reality, adding to its plausibility.

The subtext of such stories embody “the idea of the reinforcement of the power of a patriarchal society” (Harding, 2005), and hence a woman – in this case the mother– should follow the traditional values of a homemaker and not distract herself with other interests than watching for her children.

Actually, in numerous ULs from all different categories it is noticeable that when the female protagonist is in peril, she is commonly the focus of subtextual warnings that breaking social expectations will result in gruesome consequences (Harding, 2005).

In the second sample (Appendix I – 4B), a girl getting ready for a date decides to dry her hair in the microwave oven and ends up dead by ‘Boiled brains’.

The story is a warning on youth vanity and carelessness (Brunvand, 1981). The several different versions of killer hairdo legends track back to a folk tale from the thirteenth century, where a narcissistic woman spent so long embellishing her hair that the Devil decided to place a spider in her locks (Brunvand, 1981; Toropov, 2001).

Besides that, technical incompetence is a favorite theme in contemporary legends. Often the naïve user of technology is a minority member, an old person or, as is the case here, a woman. The implication, according to Brunvand (2002) is that “‘normal’ white male Americans are perfectly capable of using technology properly, whereas ‘others’ are stereotyped as being baffled by technology.” (p. 442)

3.3.1.5 SEX AND SCANDAL LEGENDS

Stories relating sex and physical danger are as old as Sodom and Gomorrah²⁰. Scary, disturbing and funny stories about sex are an indirect way to instill acceptable patterns of behavior in this taboo area (Toropov, 2001; Genge, 2000; Brunvand, 2002). They are a way of warning against what can happen to people who stray from the socially acceptable. Some common subtexts are that women should not display their sexuality or sexual appetite, no one should sleep with strangers, men should conceal their indiscretions and more recently, beware of the cyberspace.

The first sample under this category, ‘The necrophiliac’s gift’ (Appendix I – 5A), tells the story of a lady who, after having sex with a stranger, ends up ‘infected with corpse-worms’. The explanation follows

²⁰ In The Book of Genesis, Sodom and Gomorrah were cities filled with depravation. God then descended his wrath upon them by brimstone and fire.

that the stranger had fornicated with a decomposing body earlier that same day.

Not only is this story a warning against the dangers of having sex with strangers, or of unprotected sex: it also tackles on the fear of the outsider, which has been discussed in previous sections.

The emergence of AIDS in the last decades has enabled a new series of legends where the fate from sexual digression is inescapable. In AIDS stories, a person infected with the HIV virus preys on innocent victims with the intent to transmit the disease.

In our sample ‘Please check your chair when going to the movie theaters!!!!’ (Appendix I – 5B), the victim gets infected through a needle placed on a seat at the movie theater. In the various versions of HIV stories, the method for the infection might be the sexual activity itself, but also the placing of infected needles in public spots, such as a seat in the movie theater or in the change hole of a vending machine or a public telephone. Whatever the case, the message is always the same. When the topic is sex, “letting your guard down, being less than 100 percent aware of your surroundings, can be deadly” (Genge, 2000).

3.3.1.6 CRIME LEGENDS

Crime simply scares us. In order to deal with that, we share tales which are meant to belittle the criminal (Genge, 2000), either by irony or through the use of the near-disaster formula previously mentioned in section 3.2. It allows a feeling of revenge to both teller and audience against the one imposing fear upon them. The criminals in these stories most often fail, either because of law enforcement procedures, a victim’s cry for help or simply because of their own stupidity.

This near-disaster formula is present in both samples under this category. In the first, ‘Remain alert at all times’ (Appendix I – 6A), a little girl is snatched from the mother inside a large store. There is a prompt announcement of the missing child over the loud speakers and the child is soon found in a bathroom stall, head half-shaved, with a bag of clothes, a razor and a wig next to her.

In the second, ‘Be aware! Read this girls!’ (Appendix I – 6B), the victim is approached by a man who offers his services as a painter and leaves his card. The victim drives away and starts to feel dizzy, noticing also that another car has been following her. She escapes by driving into a driveway and honking the horn for help.

Both stories also deal with the fear of the stranger. According to Toropov (2001),

These popular stories may be reflections of the insecurities we feel about a society in which neighbor-to-neighbor relationships have been eclipsed by heavy work schedules, massive infusions of television, and round-the-clock Internet access. Or they may be free-floating expressions of parental and other anxieties. (p.138)

That is, in a world where we do not even know our neighbors, a malevolent snatcher could be anyone, anywhere.

Sample 6A clearly deals also with the vulnerability of children and all parental anxieties related to that. As in Accident legends (section 3.2.4), where kids fall victim of their responsible adult's neglect, here the child is snatched while the mother 'was leaning over looking for meat'. In that short period of mother's inattention, the deed was done.

Sample 6B, on the other hand, deals with the fear of being compromised while intoxicated. Several ULs refer to drugs (real or invented) that could render the victim unconscious and hence vulnerable to abduction or abuse (Toropov, 2001), as we have also seen in sample 3B where the victim is snatched and have both kidneys harvested after ingesting some type of incapacitating drug.

3.3.1.7 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LEGENDS

Some Urban Legends thrive on the mixture of what is welcome and familiar or dark and unknown to us. Business legends, also known as brand-name legends (even though the name of the product or brand is not always explicit) use the familiarity of established products to play on social fears or to take advantage of our uncertainties about processes of production we do not understand (Toropov, 2001).

In ULs, surprise and reversal of expectations are often key elements. The idea that a familiar element is actually dangerous is widespread in popular folklore. Centuries ago, the apple that looked delicious might have been poisoned. Nowadays, we wonder whether our stomach might explode if we ingest Coca-Cola and Pop Rocks at once.

The first sample under this category 'storeroom danger' (Appendix I – 7A), points to the dangers of contamination, which has become a very common theme in contemporary society (Brunvand, 2002). It is the story of a stock clerk who, after cleaning the storage room, dies from contamination by rat and mouse droppings. The explicit message is: 'always carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas or foods', since we do not know about the hygiene conditions of the

warehouses they have been stored at; and hence we feel vulnerable to entrust our lives to strangers and impersonal institutions (Harding, 2005).

The second sample ‘Ladies, caution with use of tampons’ (Appendix I – 7B) reports the experience of a lady who used Tampax Pearl and started having a series of symptoms. After several visits to doctors, they found out it was the fibers from the product that were accumulating inside her body, ‘cutting her and making her bleed’.

This legend is an example of the Goliath effect (Brunvand, 2002). Because these claims tend to be related to the largest brands, they lead to even more stories about the same brands. Tampax has been subject to several other ULs. One version talks about a lady going to the emergency room to have a stuck Tampax removed from her body and finding out the attendant doctor is her blind date for that night. In yet another story, a woman buying Tampax gets publicly embarrassed when the cashier asks for the price of the product over the loud speaker.

More than being just brand-name legends, Tampon stories usually refer to “women’s anxieties about the onset of menstruation and to embarrassment at being treated by a male medical practitioner.” (Brunvand, 2002, p. 37)

3.3.1.8 LEGENDS ABOUT GOVERNMENTS

Most government legends focus on some form of conspiracy against the interests of the citizens. In this sense, they can be very similar to conspiracy theories. “Conspiracy theories, though, lack a moral subtext and are largely without the social taboo elements that are an important part of the Urban Legend idiom” (Harding, 2005, p. 42).

One common plot is that the government is planning to institute martial law. These stories commonly arise during election periods and accuse one of the candidates of being interested in the end of democracy. We have just seen such example take form in the last Brazilian Presidential election in 2010, when an e-mail was spread all over the country accusing the Workers’ Party candidate, Dilma Rouseff, of being previously involved in extreme anti-democratic acts. She won the election nonetheless.

Barack Obama, the main character in the UL ‘The truth about Obama’ (Appendix I – 8A), is accused of being a member of a racist church. The e-mail came to me in 2010, two years after the first presidential election Obama ran as candidate and won. After this first e-mail, I had no other texts on the topic until 2012, when the following

presidential election was approaching and Obama was again running for presidency. This time, two other versions of the same legend arrived in my e-mail box.

Recently, along the spreading of the ‘Bird Flu’ we saw the flourishing of several legends alleging that the virus was purposefully created and spread by governments interested in the taxes they would receive from the medication. In our sample ‘Bird Flu – US Propaganda!’ (Appendix I – 8B), The government of The USA is accused of promoting a medicine that does not work, to cure a disease that does not exist, all in the financial interest of a few individuals.

Apart from global government legends, government legends tend to be localized not only in terms of space, but also in terms of historical time. The specific space where the legend circulates will most often be the community ruled by the mentioned government, and the events are usually related to a specific historical moment, such as the rise of the ‘Bird Flu’ or the presidential elections mentioned above.

3.3.1.9 CELEBRITY LEGENDS

We are threatened, at a very deep level, by the possibility that people who appear to be trustworthy might not be so. When it comes to stories about important role models for kids, such as children’s show presenters or child stars, there are usually elements mirroring social insecurities about sex and loss of innocence (Toropov, 2001). Because child stars often disappear after their first rush of fame, as was the case with John Gilchrist – the child star said to have died after consuming Pop Rocks and Diet soda – the public does not know what really happened to them and is ready to accept such Legends as truth (Toropov, 2001). Besides, these legends revert our expectations about its subjects since their fate is usually a grim contrast to the characters they play.

Some typical themes in this type of lore are the report of a celebrity’s death, the secret for a celebrity’s good looks, chance encounters and the celebrity’s humanity (Brunvand, 2002).

It is Michelle Obama’s humanity that is on spot in the first sample under this category: ‘Okay... I’ve had it... Really had it with Michelle Obama.’ (Appendix I – 9A) It reports that ‘during a 9-11 commemoration’, while a guard folded the American flag as it is done: ‘with reverence and respect, folded precisely and crisply... honored’, Michelle leaned over to Obama and asked: ‘All of this for a damned flag?’

Celebrities' reactions to these ULs vary, and while some deny the stories completely, others prefer to simply not comment while still others allow such tales to be embroidered to their public personas (Brunvand, 2002).

Jon Bon Jovi, in response to the report of his own death in sample 'News: Jon Bon Jovi's Death' (Appendix I – 9B), which circulated in the last months of 2011, published on his Facebook wall a dated picture of himself on Christmas morning (Figure 3.2), thus proving to his fans he was still alive and well.

Figure 3.2 Jon Bon Jovi's response to the report of his death



While a few of these legends might become global, they are most often localized to the specific cultures where the celebrity is known. Dale (2005), who is an English folklorist, cites several ULs about the Royal Family –that the Queen uses a side door of the Buckingham Palace at night to go window shopping in Oxford Street, for example – which do not appear in collections and studies by North American authors. Sometimes, the plot of the legend is maintained in different locations, but the subject is substituted for a famous local celebrity.

3.3.1.10 ACADEMIC LEGENDS

Academic legends typically concern faculty members or crisis among students, but the campus itself can become a subject in stories about libraries sinking to the ground because the engineer forgot to calculate the weight of the books it would later hold, for example (Brunvand, 2002).

What most these legends have in common is the fact that the College or University functions as a metaphor for adult life, since it is the first place where many people establish social identities separate from their roles as the daughter or son of someone else (Genge, 2000; Toropov, 2001). Hence, they expose uncertainties about mortality, sexuality, evaluations and facts of adult life in general.

The first sample in this category is ‘They pushed her down a sewer’ (Appendix I – 10A) is clearly about mortality. It tells the story of a girl named Carmen, who was pushed down a sewer by some classmates and died from the fall. The classmates told everyone she fell. It goes on to tell the story of several other young adults who received the e-mail telling her story, did not re-send it to anyone, and ended up dead as well. It warns: ‘if you don’t repost this [...] Then Carmen will get you’.

Another common protagonist in these legends is the professor. Portrayed as “too human” (Genge, 2000, p. 232), professors are prone to making mistakes, suffering accidents, learning inability and so on.

In the sample ‘Flunk me if you can’ (Appendix I – 10B) the class is taking their exams. Time runs out and all students hand-in their papers, except for one who keeps on writing. A few minutes later, the student wants to deliver his paper, but the Professor will not accept it anymore. After making sure the professor does not know his name, the student grabs the pile of papers, putting his own paper in it, and throws the entire pile up in the air, thus mixing his up with all the other exams.

It points to a common belief that, because College or University professors deal with a large number of students, they cannot know the name of them all. Besides, it also tackles students’ uncertainties about evaluations (Toropov, 2001) and the expected responsibilities of College and University students.

3.3.2 TENOR

As previously noted, tenor is the contextual parameter which concerns the relationship between participants in an interaction. In face-

to-face interactions participant roles may be easy to identify, since they provide extralinguistic tools that help with that, such as physical contact, gesture, posture, voice pitch or volume. In written communication, on the other hand, specification of tenor is more difficult, since communication flows mainly²¹ from one direction, from the producer/sender to its reader.

In ULs, there is a conflict between creating friendship through a false sense of dialogism and offering information under a status of truth, which is not supposed to be argued upon.

In interaction people try to show and maintain to others an image of him/herself that is positively evaluated by the group or person she/he is communicating with, which Goffman (1967, cited in Heberle 1997) has called *facework*. In ULs, even though the communication may be unsolicited, and its topic disgusting or distressing to some readers, which could both be considered *face-threatening* activities, the sender/writer creates a friendly tone and attempts to justify communication in terms of its importance. Senders hence protect their face by including themselves in the text as possible victims, as part of a group of ‘we’ senders and readers and our friends who need to be warned since ‘we’ are not part of the ‘they’ who are supposed to be deceivers (which will be further discussed in section 5.2.2). Besides, these texts use hedging to save face, as by employing legitimizing techniques such as presenting expert opinion and mythopoesis (Chapter 5).

Usually, senders signal that their turn has ended and signal that the turn of the reader has begun by giving the order to pass the email along. In a sense, resending the email would be part of the turn-taking, and consequently a person who does not follow such command is being impolite to the group, and possibly counting oneself as not being part of that group of ‘we’ who could fall victim of the threats.

The friendly tone may also be an important part of the dialogism required so that ULs can function as a collective way to make meaning through telling stories, serving the function proposed by DiFonzo and Bordia (2007). Hence, ULs fulfill our need for meaning, to promote cultural and moral values and to deal with our fears verbally. The interpersonal relations construed in these texts are a significant part of this meaning making process.

²¹ Interactive media does allow more dialogic written interaction, as in SMS messaging, discussion forums or social media threads. E-mails, however, remain mostly one-way.

3.3.3 MODE

The third register variable, mode of discourse, refers to the symbolic organization of the text, to the part language is playing in communication and how a text relies on a specific rhetorical mode or a generic structure in order to make meaning. In ULs, the role of language is constitutive, but visuals and intertextuality can be ancillary in legitimizing the reported events. This is an important difference from oral tradition ULs. The change in channel and medium from a spoken, face-to-face interaction, to the written, e-mail format transmission of ULs in contemporary society has allowed for the expansion of the use of visual resources as part of the meaning making process.

The mode in ULs also reveals the complexity of the relation between different contextual parameters and their realization in lexicogrammar. While in e-mails the process of information sharing is monologic, one could expect such texts to mostly offer information, which would be lexicogrammatically realized in statements. However, because the tenor of the relationship between senders and readers of ULs requires that power relations be non-hierarchical and social distance as minimal as possible (characteristics which are most related to spoken interaction), ULs also draw on questions (which will be further discussed in Chapter 4), rhetoric as they might be, to fake a dialogism that is most commonly related to the phonic channel.

3.4 FINAL REMARKS

As I hope to have shown in this chapter, Urban Legends are a widespread phenomenon that has been adapted to new technologies. These entertaining and frequently unbelievable stories should not be accepted as harmless, though. They transmit messages of what is and what is not acceptable in the societies they circulate, and as such,

they can be a means of instruction, particularly in the realm of morality and mores, and, in some cases, they can be used as a device to control the behavior of others, from groups of small children to whole nations. (Harding, 2005, p. 12)

In looking at these tales, we may glimpse the prejudices, fears and societal norms they reinforce. Hence, “to understand folklore and therefore the realm of the Urban Legend is to understand the psyche of a nation.” (Harding, 2005, p. 31)

In the next chapter, I discuss the lexicogrammatical choices in the samples presented above, through the analysis of TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and modality in the clauses that compose such texts.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF LEXICOGRAMMATICAL REALIZATIONS IN URBAN LEGENDS

As previously presented in Chapter Two, Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) offers a method for the analysis of texts where ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings are realized through specific lexicogrammatical configurations at the level of the clause. Besides, it focuses on how texts instantiate culturally determined conventions.

This perspective allows texts to be seen both as specimens and as artifacts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). As specimens, texts illustrate possible configurations of the grammatical features of language. As artifacts, they realize sociosemantic meanings through the way in which lexicogrammar is employed. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 3),

These two perspectives are clearly complementary: we cannot explain why a text means what it does, with all the various readings and values that may be given to it, except by relating it to the linguistic system as a whole; and equally, we cannot use it as a window on the system unless we understand what it means and why.

Following this perspective, SFG is used in this study as a tool for the description of lexicogrammatical realizations in ULs in a way that can unveil sociosemantic meanings.

The purpose of this chapter is then to describe the linguistic realizations that construe the representation of participants and events in ULs as well as to consider aspects of modality that establish the relationship between senders and readers of such texts, hence exposing ideational and interpersonal meanings, that is, showing how the content of the ULs are materially expressed.

4.1 PROCEDURES FOR THE LEXICOGRAMMATICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA

First, the twenty Urban Legends that compose the data were separated into clauses. The clauses were then divided into participants, processes and circumstances.

Because each legend involves different social actors, it was imperative to classify such actors into general categories of participants, according to their role in the plots. Seven types of participants were found and will be further discussed in the next section: victims, deceivers, legitimizers, readers, senders, possible victims and others.

Also, each clause was classified according to the types of processes discussed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004): material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioral and existential.

After that, I classified the clauses according to their process types and counted the occurrences of each type of process, revealing their frequency in the data. Besides, I could relate each type of process to the participants involved in them.

Each clause was then categorized in terms of their speech function (statement, offer, question or command), and occurrences were added up in order to expose a general pattern, which is expected to be closely related to the rhetorical mode of texts.

The next step was to consider aspects of modality, so using the search tool in *Word for Windows*, I located occurrences of modal adjuncts and modal finite operators, which are related to, and hence can reveal aspects of tenor. In order to do so, I followed the examples offered by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) that can be seen on the following Tables:

Table 4.1 Modal Adjuncts (adapted from Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 82)

	Type	Meaning	Examples
I	probability	how likely?	probably, possibly, certainly, perhaps, maybe
	usuality	how often?	usually, sometimes, always, (n)ever, often, seldom
	typicality	how typical?	occasionally, generally, regularly, for the most part
	obviousness	how obvious?	of course, surely, obviously, clearly
II	opinion	I think	in my opinion, personally, to my mind
	admission	I admit	frankly, to-be honest, to tell you the truth
	persuasion	I assure you	honestly, really, believe me, seriously
	entreaty	I request you	please, kindly
	presumption	I presume	evidently, apparently, no doubt, presumably
	desirability	how desirable?	(un)fortunately, to my delight/distress, regrettably, hopefully
	reservation	how reliable?	at first, tentatively, provisionally, looking back on it
	validation	how valid?	broadly speaking, in general, on the whole, strictly speaking, in principle
	evaluation	how sensible?	(un)wisely, understandably, mistakenly, foolishly
	prediction	how expected?	to my surprise, surprisingly, as expected, by chance

Table 4.2 Finite Modal Operators (adapted from Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 116)

Modal operators:			
	low	median	high
positive	can, may, could, might, (dare)	will, would, should, is/was to	must, ought to, need, has/had to
negative	needn't, doesn't/didn't + need to, have to	won't, wouldn't, shouldn't, (isn't/wasn't to)	mustn't, oughtn't to, can't, couldn't, (mayn't, mightn't, hasn't/hadn't to)

Finally, I re-read the texts looking for any other configurations of modality, as for example any other adjuncts that could be functioning as to modalize the text or those that appear in grammatical metaphors.

4.1.2 PARTICIPANTS IN URBAN LEGENDS

The analysis of TRANSITIVITY allowed me to specify general categories of participants. Since in each sample the social actors portrayed in the story are different, it was necessary to categorize them in a way as to organize their study (i) as participants in the clauses, as we will see in this chapter, and (ii) as social actors, which will be critical for the discussion presented in Chapter 5.

All of the samples present some kind of Victim. Most of the times, the victim is the one who suffers the deceit or unavoidable event reported in the story. In Sample 3B, for example, the victim is 'a business traveler', also mentioned in the text as 'they' and 'the traveler', who has his/her kidneys harvested. In other Samples, however, there may not be an actual deceit involved. That is the case, for instance, with both samples in the category of Celebrity Legends. In Samples 9A and 9B, there are reports of events supposed to have happened with 'Michelle Obama' and 'Jon Bon Jovi'. Even though neither Michelle Obama nor Jon Bon Jovi is victim of any reported crime or scam, they can be considered victims of the disparage since their personas are somehow being discredited by the reported facts. Similarly, 'Daisy', the dog that saved over nine-hundred lives in Sample 2B, could be more coherently seen as a hero. However, for the purpose of this study, I shall also consider the dog a victim, as it is the object of the chatter.

The participant classified as Deceiver is the one who perpetrates the scam or deceit. They can be people, as in 'criminals' (1A), 'some sick person' (6A) and 'five girls in her school' (10A); but also non-human entities that can be responsible for the suffering of the victim,

such as *'a small spider'* (2A), *'parasites'* (3A) and *'the drug'* (6B). Besides, the deceiver can be nominalized, as in *'I wish to warn you about a new crime ring that is targeting business travellers'* and (3B) *'an incident occurred [...] it was a needle [...] and it was HIV positive!'* (5B), or ellipsed, as in *'they found it had been stolen, along with all their possessions...'* (1B). Both when nominalized or ellipsed, the human agent is backgrounded in favor of the facts; nonetheless, these cases are still considered deceivers in the analysis.

The participant classified as Legitimazer appears in these stories to confirm the reported facts and hence add credibility to the narrative. They can be personal, in the case of people who, given their position in the story, either have previous knowledge of the reported facts, have participated as witness, or can offer expert knowledge. Some examples are *'the attendant inside'* (1A), *'one toxicologist'* (2A), *'Dr. Lynch'* (3A) and *'my friend'* (4B). Legitimizers can also be impersonal, or institutionalized, in cases such as *'The Health Department'* (2A), *'The Civilian Aeronautics Board'* (2A), or *'the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta'* (7A).

The Reader is also frequently mentioned in the samples. When clearly stated, it appears mostly through the personal pronoun *'you'* (1A, 2A, 3A, 3B and several others), but other forms can be found, as *'Ladies'* (1A), *'all'* (3A), and *'guys'* (6A). Most of the times, however, the reader is implicit in commands directed at him/her, such as *'please pass this on to other women'* (1A), *'don't go alone'* (1A), *'click on the link below'* (8A) and *'be careful'* (3B).

The Sender is mostly referred to by the personal pronoun *'I'*, but it also appears in the form of the object pronoun *'me'* in *'let me forewarn you'* (3A). Besides, in two occurrences it is ellipsed: *'Hi all wanted to share something'* (6A) and *'Thanks for reading'* (6A).

Possible Victims were more difficult to identify. One might argue that every reader may be considered by the sender a possible *future* victim, and that every sender *was* a possible victim before they were themselves warned against the reported scam or crime. Even though I agree with this interpretation, it would create an overlapping between the categories of sender, reader and possible victim. Consequently, I have chosen to identify readers and senders as possible victims only when they are clearly represented in the texts as such. Hence, in situations such as *'we do not know what parasite is in our clothes when we buy them'* (3A) or *'most of us just plop down into the seats'* (5B), I have considered the participants as possible victims because the writer includes both sender and receiver of the text as people who engage in

risky behavior: buying clothes and plopping down into movie theater seats without checking them first. Most of the times, however, possible victims are those who need to be warned: ‘*as many females as possible*’ (1A), ‘*someone close to you*’ (3B), and ‘*any friend who has children*’ (6A), for example.

The term Other refers to participants that are mentioned in the story, but who appear as ancillary, and hence do not qualify as members of any of the previously discussed categories. The narrative in Sample 2B, for example, begins as such: ‘*James Crane worked on the 101st of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center. He is blind so he has a golden retriever named Daisy.*’ This character, James Crane, appears to contextualize the story, explaining how the hero dog became involved in the tragedy. He is neither a victim nor reappears latter in the story to function as a witness, and was hence considered as Other.

Considering this general categorization of participants, I then looked at the types of processes realized by them. The following Table (4.3) shows the number of occurrences of these participants in relation to the processes they engage in.

Table 4.3 Participants and Processes in ULs

Participant Process	Victim	Deceiver	Legitim�izer	Reader	Sender	P.V.	Other	Total
Material	146	80	46	43	9	14	35	373
Mental	23	1	2	8	5	3	4	46
Verbal	24	4	14	10	10	2	11	75
Rel. Att.	66	48	1	4	1	2	17	139
Rel. Id.	2	11				1	1	15
Behavioral	9	2		1	3		3	18
Existential								9
Total	270	146	63	66	28	22	71	675

The most common participant in the ULs under study is the victim, followed by the deceiver, and both are involved in all types of processes. Legitim�izers, readers and senders are mostly involved in material and verbal processes, while possible victims tend to perform material actions. These participants and the processes they are engaged in will be further discussed in the following sections.

4.2 ASPECTS OF TRANSITIVITY IN URBAN LEGENDS

In Chapter Two, I discussed the way in which the TRANSITIVITY system exposes the ideational meanings behind language use; That is, it shows how reality is represented in specific

texts. Consequently, through the analysis of TRANSITIVITY patterns we can explain the field of the situation, in other words, what is being talked about.

Following this perspective, in each Clause of a text a process type is selected to represent the action, events or relation between participants. In the system of TRANSITIVITY, each process type (material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioral or existential) involves specific associated participant roles, and “In selecting which process type to use, and what configuration of participants to express, participants are actively choosing to represent experience in a particular way” (Eggins, 2004, p. 253).

According to Martin (2000), this representation of ideational meanings through the TRANSITIVITY system is relevant for a Critical Discourse Analysis since ideational meanings construct power in assigning agency to some participants and not others. This dimension of meaning is then “central to the analysis of inequality and power in discourse” (ibid. p. 276), since it allows the understanding of “who is acting, what kinds of action they undertake, and who or what if anything they act upon” (ibid. p. 276).

The following sections will hence describe the use of the different process types in the clauses that constitute the samples under analysis focusing on their associated participant roles. The overarching intent of such description is to unveil what participants (from the general categorization presented previously in section 4.1.2) are given the power of agency over each specific process type.

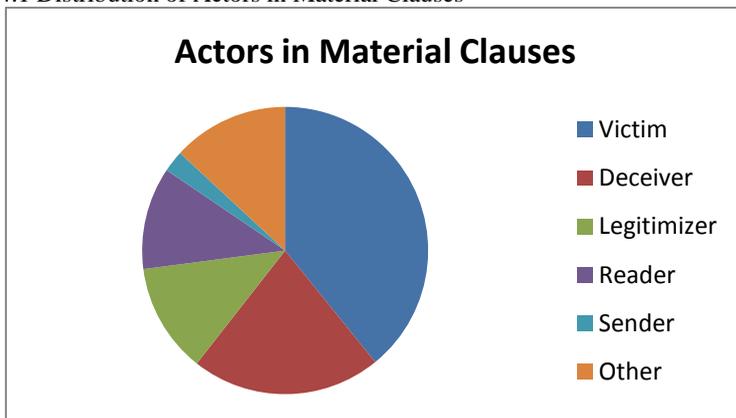
4.2.1 MATERIAL PROCESSES

Following the SFL perspective, I understand that different registers tend to present a characteristic mixture of process types. It is expected that in narratives, “the main event line is construed predominantly by ‘material’ clauses” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 174), that is, clauses which represent a sequence of concrete changes brought about by a participant, the Actor, as can be seen in the following extract:

The report is that the new gang initiation thing is to bring back a woman’s body part. One way they *are doing* this *is crawling* under girls/women’s cars while they’re *pumping* gas or at grocery stores in the night time. Then they *are cutting* the lady’s ankles *to disable* them in order *to kidnap* them, *kill* and *dismember* them. (1A)

Accordingly, over half of the clauses in the ULs construe material processes: 373 out of a total of 675 clauses. Most Actors in these clauses is the victim, followed by the deceiver, legitimizer and then the reader, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Distribution of Actors in Material Clauses



Focusing on the material processes acted out by the victim and the deceiver, one can notice an important difference. Material processes always require that the Actor, through some input of energy, brings about a concrete change in the flow of events (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This change, however, can be either confined to the Actor itself, or extended to another participant. In ULs, the change brought about by the victims' actions tend to be confined to the victim him/herself, while deceivers' actions tend to unfold over the victims. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), when only one participant is needed for the unfolding of the process, such material clause represents a 'happening'. Otherwise, when the outcome of the process affects another participant, the Goal, the clause represents a 'doing'²².

Most Victims in the data tend to act in material clauses where the outcome is confined to the victim itself, hence representing a

²² Halliday (2004) relates clauses of 'happening' to what Traditional Grammar calls intransitive verbs and clauses of 'doing' to transitive. However, he points out that "these concepts relate more appropriately to the clause than to the verb" (p. 181). Consequently, verbs that in traditional grammar would be considered transitive might, in Systemic Functional Grammar be seen as intransitive, as for example the process 'reach' that appears in sample 2A.

‘happening’. In this sense, the outcome of their actions does not affect other participants, as can be seen in the following clauses:

When they finally *reached* the outskirts of civilization (1B)

3 women in Chicago *turned up* at hospitals over a five day period, all with the same symptoms. (2A)

Several days later a lawyer from Los Angeles *showed up* at a hospital emergency room. (2A)

She *started developing* intense pains (3A)

She *started* to bleed. (3A)

The day came but she never *showed up* (4B)

Deceivers, on the other hand, tend to act in material processes that represent a ‘doing’, where the outcome of the process initiated by them extends to a different participant: the Goal. Besides, it is also noticeable that the Goal of such material processes is mostly the victim:

These larvae *were feeding off* the fat, tissue and even milk canals of her bosom. (3A)

... a new crime ring that *is targeting* business travelers. (3B)

And [the deciver] *offers to buy* them [the victim] a drink. (3B)

He *had fornicated* with a decomposing corpse earlier that same day. (5A)

And something [the deceiver] *was poking* her [the victim] (5B)

[this person] *took* the little girl, *brought* her into the bathroom, *shaved* half her head intending to shave it all, *undressed* her in less than 10 min. (6A)

A man *came over and offered* his services as a painter to a female [...] and *left* her his card. (6B)

The legitimizers, fulfilling their previously discussed function to confirm the reported facts, act in material clauses that can lead to such conclusions. Mostly, they later investigate the report in order to find out what has happened, but they can also be actively involved in the event, as is the case with doctors when they perform job-related actions in the plot:

That is when one toxicologist, remembering an article he had read, *drove out* to the restaurant, *went into* the restroom, and *lifted* the toilet seat. Under the seat, out of normal view, was small spider. (2A)

When police *arrived* they *could reconstruct* the girls last moments. (4B)

The doctor *went to get* some cultures, but *found* that her cervix was bleeding. (7B)

Paramedics *responded* to a 911 call from the home. When they *arrived*, Bon Jovi was not breathing. The paramedics *performed* CPR and *took* Bon Jovi to Jersey Shore Medical Center (9B)

The N.J. County coroner’s office *will determine* a cause of death. (9B)

The reader always appears as Actor in material clauses that are commands. In this sense, the sender is instructing the reader to perform material processes in order to avoid becoming a victim of the reported crime or deceit, as can be seen in the following examples:

If at all possible, *don't go alone!* (1A)

The message: Always *lock* your car doors. (1A)

Check underneath your car when approaching it for reentry and *check* in the back before getting in. (1A)

So please, before you *use* a public toilet, *lift* the seat to check for spiders. (2A)

Please make sure you *iron* your undergarments before you wear them. (3A)

If you *must go* to the movies, PLEASE, PLEASE *Check!* One of the safest ways is *NOT sticking* your hands between the seats, but *moving* the seat up and down and really *look!* (5B)

There is, then, a relation of causality: *if you do what you are told, then you are safe*. Although this relation is not always lexically explicit in the text, Halliday and Hassan (1989) remind us that textual relations may be part of two environments: the co-text and the context. Then, the source of interpretation of this implicit relation may be exophoric and seen through its reference to non-linguistic units²³.

The sender, in its few occurrences as Actor, reports on the experience of nearly being deceived, and his/her own procedures to avoid it in the future:

I have used a few, just to *try* them, but *will be throwing out* any that I have left. *I am* also *going home* and *inspect* my regular tampons. (7B)

4.2.2 RELATIONAL ATTRIBUTIVE AND RELATIONAL IDENTIFYING PROCESSES

Relational clauses in Urban Legends are those that characterize or identify participants and they do so on the basis of three types of relation: they can be intensive ('x is a'), possessive ('x has a') or circumstantial ('x is at a') (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In ULs, these relations tend to be directed at two main participants, the victim and the deceiver, and this is closely related to the interpersonal aspect of the texts since such clauses may carry judgments of their participants.

Most of the relational attributive clauses in the data, 66 out of 139, present Attributes of the victim. Intensive and possessive relations are not uncommon, but the most frequent instances seem to indicate the

²³ Sociosemantic aspects of ULs will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

circumstances in which the victim ended up being deceived. Relational clauses can concern both experiences of the material world, or 'outer' experiences, and of the world of consciousness, or of 'inner' experiences. In the data, then, 'outer' experiences are related to the circumstantial relations assigned to the victim, as in:

A family who were on vacation (1B)

They were several hours away from the nearest sizable city (1B)

He had been away on business, (2A)

He had been in a warehouse or exposed to dried rat or mouse droppings at any time. (7A)

The 'inner' experiences of the victim, on the other hand, seem to be mostly represented by intensive and possessive relations, and they refer to the state of the victim before or after falling victim of the deception:

She got injured (2B)

She suffered acute smoke inhalation, severe burns on all four paws, and a broken leg. (2B)

Her left breast became more inflamed (3A)

Susan's pain grew more intense (3A)

They are believers. (4A)

Milagros Esteves was a fine girl, but not too bright. (4B)

Later, the woman fell ill. (5A)

She was "infected with corpse-worms" (maggots). (5A)

Her head was half shaved, and she was dressed in her underwear with a bag of clothes, a razor, and wig sitting on the floor right besides her. (6A)

Within two days he was so ill and weak, his blood sugar count was down to 66 and his face and eyeballs were yellow. (7A)

The second most frequent occurrences of relational attributive processes concern the experiences of the Deceiver. The inner experiences, again represented through intensive and possessive relations, give the Attributes that describe the deceiver or the deception itself:

This is real! (1A)

This spider's venom is extremely toxic. (2A)

This is so squirmish, (3A)

It is so grotesque. (3A)

This looks horrible. (3A)

This ring is well organized, well funded, has very skilled personnel, (3B)

It is documented and confirmable. (3B)

Which is toxic and obviously lethal!! (7A)

The outer experiences of the deceiver, on the other hand, are circumstantially represented and tend to locate the deceiver in mundane, everyday environments. This ordinary localization brings proximity between the deceiver and the victims or possible victims, indicating they may eventually share close, or even the same, spaces.

Under the seat, out of normal view, was small spider. (2A)

What parasite is in our clothes (3A)

And [this ring] is currently in most major cities and recently very active in New Orleans. (3B)

The men were immediately behind her. (6B)

Canned drinks and other food stuffs are stored in warehouses and containers (7A)

Even though there are only four instances of the reader appearing as Carrier of Attributes, it is significant that in three of them the Attribute is related to being cautious, and they all appear in commands:

Be extra careful going to and from your car at night. (1A)

Please be careful. (3B)

Be cautious. (5B)

Most of the identifying relational processes in the data (11 out of 15) identify the deceiver. From these identifications, most serve as to specify who the deceiver is. They name the deceiver so there is no doubt about who it is:

It was determined to be the South American Blush Spider (*arachnius gluteus*) (2A)

The drug is called 'BURUNDANGA' (6B)

It was the Tampax Pearl Fibers. (7B)

It's the Trinity Church of Christ. (8A)

Obama's middle name is Mohammed. (8A)

However, in some instances, identifying relational processes seem to generalize the deceiver, suggesting it can be anyone, anywhere:

Whoever this person was (6A)

The ugly truth is... even the most modern, upper-class, super store has rats and mice. (7A)

4.2.3 VERBAL PROCESSES

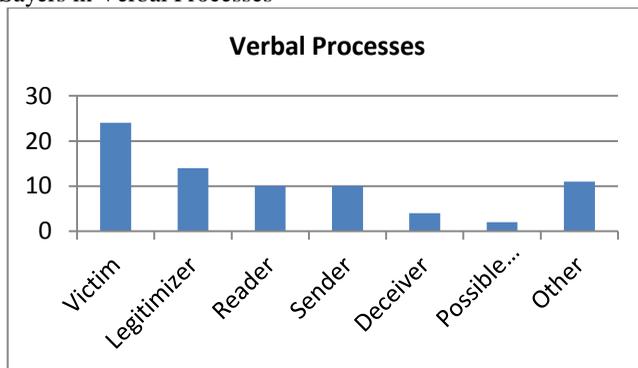
Verbal processes are an important aspect of representation in Urban Legends, mainly because the transmission of Legends in itself is based on an exchange of meaning. Generally speaking, in Systemic Functional Grammar verbal processes are processes of saying, so they construe dialogism and are an important aspect in the creation of narrative (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). However, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) remind us, TRANSITIVITY is a system of the

clause, and hence, verbal clauses might involve “any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning” (p.253), so that processes which might at a first glance appear not to be verbal can realize verbal clauses. Some examples of this from the data are ‘*Please forward this message to the people you care about*’ (7A) and ‘*Share with your sisters, daughters, nieces [...]*’ (6B), where the processes ‘forward’ and ‘share’ clearly refer to the transmission of the text, and are thus, here considered types of meaning exchange.

The participants involved in these exchanges of meaning are the Sayer, who transmits the message, the Receiver of the message and the Verbiage, that is, the message itself.

In Urban Legends, verbal clauses allow the writer to ascribe information to specific participants, as the victims themselves or the legitimizers. Also, they indicate the ability of readers and senders to spread the information reported on the legends.

Figure 4.2 Sayers in Verbal Processes



As we can see in Figure 4.2, the victim is the most frequent Sayer in verbal clauses. In these occurrences, the victim fulfills different roles. In some instances, for narrative purposes, the victim simply interacts verbally with other people throughout the unfolding of the story or reports on his/her condition to specialists.

- She told him that [the transaction showed complete and approved] (1A)
- And [she] started arguing with the attendant about his threat. (1A)
- She said no, but accepted his card. (6B)
- Obama mentioned his church during his appearance with Oprah. (8A)
- He said goodnight to his mom (10A)
- She told doctors that she had been away on vacation. (2A)

Before his death, he told the doctor that he had been away on business.
(2A)

Besides, the victim also asks for help and may report on the events s/he suffered in order to warn possible victims.

The business traveler calls 911. (3B)

And began to honk her horn to ask for help. (6B)

She told me and every woman she knows in order to get the word out
(7B)

Legitimizers, when fulfilling the role of Sayer, mostly interact with the victim in order to offer instructions on how to proceed or to explain what has happened.

The Civilian Aeronautics Board (CAB) ordered an immediate inspection of the toilets of all flights from South America (2A)

The fireman explained. (2B)

And [the doctor] announced that she was infected (5A)

They [doctors] said that there is a virus (much like Hanta virus) (7A)

And [Dr. Lynch] told Susan to seek the aid of one of his colleagues.
(3A)

The business traveler is instructed by the 911 operator (3B)

Besides, legitimizers can also interact verbally with the media, reporting on the events.

City and law enforcement of Asbury Park, NJ sources told The Times.
(9B)

New Jersey Fire Department-First Aid Captain Douglas Gray told The Times. (9B)

The reader, as Sayer, is given the power to inform other people about the reported events, transmitting the message.

And please pass this on to everyone you care about. (2A)

Guys tell your wife, sisters, girlfriends, and girl cousins wash bra before wearing. (3A)

FORWARD TO EVERYBODY YOU KNOW. (3A)

Hi guys! Please take the time and forward this (6A)

Share with your sisters, daughters, nieces, mothers, female friends, EVERYONE. (6B)

Please forward this message to the people you care about. (7A)

The sender, similarly, informs the reader about the reported deception.

LET ME FOREWARN YOU (3A)

Dear Friends, I wish to warn you about a new crime ring (3B)

But, as I said, (4A)

Hi all wanted to share something (6A)

And let me say (6A)

I said I'd spread the word. (7B)

4.2.4 MENTAL PROCESSES

Mental processes in the samples are mostly performed by the victim, who is Senser in 50% of the occurrences. Such clauses can either refer to the feelings of the victim previous to the deceit, or to the realization of what is happening. These are processes of sensing (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), and can be concerned with the realm of perceptions and feelings or of consciousness: “a ‘mental’ clause construes a quantum of change in the flow of events taking place in our own consciousness.” (p. 197)

her heart was set on going on this last trip with her grandchildren. (1B)
one guy she really liked, so on the day of the date she wanted to look pretty. (4B)

She quickly dismissed it believing that the holes would leave in time. (3A)

The last thing the traveler remembers (3B)

She tried to open the window and realized that the odor was on her hand; (6B)

she quickly thought better of it [...] she had figured out what it was herself (7B)

The reader in mental clauses is assigned the mental ability of awareness since they have been warned against the possible deceit. Mostly, this participant appears in commands, which offer a logical consequence: since you have been warned, now you can be careful not to fall victim.

Ladies, beware at the gas station (1A)

Always be aware of your surroundings (1A)

Be aware. (3A)

so please beware, (3A)

Are you aware that Obama’s middle name is Mohamed? (8A)

The sender, when functioning as Senser, expresses his/her feelings or impressions about the reported scam and shows the importance s/he awards to the sharing of such information.

I felt that I should share with you. (3A)

I know a yeast infection is an awful thing to experience, but this is so much worse! (7B)

I found this interesting. (8A)

I cannot believe this has not been all over the TV and newspapers. (8A)

4.2.5 BEHAVIORAL AND EXISTENTIAL PROCESSES

Behavioral and existential processes are the process types which appear less in the data. Behavioral clauses are similar to those

representing material processes, but they are typically about physiological and psychological behavior, and are realized by a conscious participant called the Behavior (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In Uls, Behaviors are mostly the victim.

[she] looked out there in time to see the car door open and the guy slip out. (1A)

Unfortunately, at some point during the long drive Grandma passed away in the back seat of the car. (1B)

James hears about this and falls on his knees into tears. (2B)

until they wake up in a hotel room bathtub, their body submerged to their neck in ice (3B)

Existential clauses, on the other hand, are closer to relational ones, since both refer to processes of being. Existentials, as the name says, express the existence of something, and are usually structured through ‘there’ and some form of the verb ‘to be’.

There is a note taped to the wall (3B)

Apparently there was a substance on the card (6B)

There was a lot of old blood in the way (7B)

There is an unabashedly racist running for president. (8A)

There is no audio (9A)

4.2.6. CIRCUMSTANCES

Circumstances of time and place in Urban Legends locate the narrated events as close to the reader both in chronologic and geographical terms. The circumstances from the data are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Geographically, the narratives take place in mundane environments or in specific locations supposedly well-known to the readers. Gas/service stations, shopping places, movie theaters, schools, the streets or the town are very general circumstances that almost anyone can relate to. More specific locations, such as Chicago, Indiana and Sam’s Club, on their turn, tend to be adapted²⁴ to fit the current whereabouts of the receivers of such texts. In my collection, text 10A, which tells the story of a girl who gets killed by classmates and becomes a revengeful ghost, is an interesting example of that. Variants in different languages (which can be seen in Appendix IV) all maintain the same broad circumstance ‘school’. However, the Spanish and French versions have totally dropped the specific geographic location ‘Indiana’,

²⁴ The characteristic adaptability of ULs has been previously discussed in Chapter 3.

making it more suitable to fit the context of the language in which the story is written. The Portuguese version, on the other hand, explains the girl had just moved to Indiana (without mention of her origin) and hence had troubles with the new classmates.

Table 4.4 Circumstances of Place and Time in Urban Legends

	Place	Time		Place	Time
1A	Pay-at-the-pump gas station The back seat of her car Grocery stores Your surroundings General vicinity	In the night time New threat Always At night	6A	Sam's Club Meat dept. Bathroom stall Shopping places	Today 3 min. 5 min.
1B	Remote part of the country Several hours away from the nearest sizable city Service station	On vacation	6B	Katy, Tx Service station On the streets	New
2A	Chicago Restaurant (Big Chappies, at Blare Airport) Cold, dark, damp climates Toilet rims Los Angeles New York South America Anywhere Public toilet	5 day period Within days Several days later Now	7A	Storeroom Maui, Hawaii The emergency at Pali Momi Warehouse Supermarket Stores Super stores	Couple of days later Within two days Shortly before midnight Always Whenever
2B	101st of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center	9-11-01 The next week	7B	Bathroom	5 months ago
3A	Zimbabwe South America	After	8A	On the website The Trinity Church of Christ U.S.	
3B	Most major cities New Orleans A lounge In the bar	New Currently Recently At the end of the work day Hotel room bath tub	8B	Vietnam The whole world Worldwide The entire world	9 years ago All that time
4A	San Antonio Virginia Tech In the driveway	Just Right now Yesterday At the moment	9A	On Barack's right side	A 9-11 commemoration over the weekend
4B	Kitchen	One Day The Day of the date	9B	Empress Hotel] New Jersey	Today
5A	On the town	One night Earlier that same day	10A	Indiana Her school In the sewer The toilet The shower	6 years ago 2 months ago 5 hours later
5B	Movie theaters		10B	In college	Final exams

Two of the texts from the data indicate the origin of the threat. In Sample 2A, the killer spiders come from South America, while in 3A, the victim was contaminated in South America but there is also the information that *'this is happening in Zimbabwe as well'*. Such examples indicate a tendency to see the threat as part of the world of 'others', especially less developed parts of the world.

Circumstances of time, on their turn, situate the narration as current. The threats can be described as 'new', and the events are told as recent. In Samples 8B and 10A, events from the past (9 years ago and 6 years ago respectively) have a tragic consequence in the present, that is, at the time the reader receives the e-mail. Besides, circumstances of time in the warnings, such as in *'ALWAYS lock your car doors'* (1A) tend to indicate urgency through the use of the words 'always' and 'whenever'.

Circumstances in ULs hence portray the threat as part of the world of the reader, as events that can happen anytime, anywhere. Consequently, receivers of such E-mails can relate to the victim and understand such perils as personal.

4.3 ASPECTS OF MOOD AND MODALITY IN URBAN LEGENDS

The last sections have described the constitution of clauses in ULs from an ideational perspective that is, focusing on *what* is being represented. However, Urban Legends are also language used as/in interaction, where participants establish a relationship among them through their choices of *how* to make meaning, realizing the interpersonal metafunction of language. In ULs, interpersonal meanings involve both the speech functions assumed by participants in interaction and the way in which they modalize what is said.

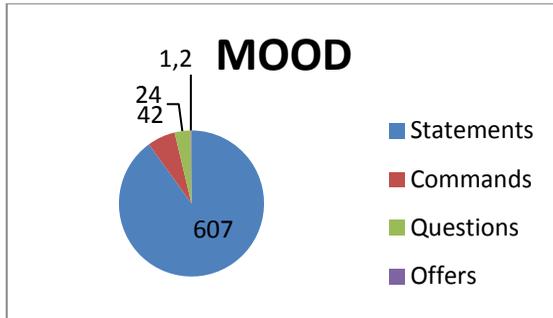
The following sections will present a description of the realizations of MOOD and modality in the data, in an attempt to unveil how the relationship between readers and senders is established by the producers/reproducers of ULs.

4.3.1 SPEECH FUNCTIONS

Urban Legends, a type of narrative and hence mostly monologic, is meant to offer information on events that (are supposed to) have happened. Consequently, the high frequency of statements in the samples was expected. The Figure below (4.3) shows the occurrences of the different speech functions in the data by number and visually

demonstrates the preponderance of declarative clauses that give information.

Figure 4.3 Speech Functions in ULs



Commands, typically realized through imperatives, are the second most frequent type of speech function in the samples. Such commands are issued by the sender to the reader, who must either continue the spread of the information by re-sending the e-mail or take measures not to fall victim of the deceit.

- Please pass this on to other women, young and old alike. (1A)
- And please pass this on to everyone you care about (2A)
- FORWARD TO EVERYBODY YOU KNOW (3A)
- Please take the time and forward this (6A)
- Be extra careful going to and from your car at night. (1A)
- So please, before you use a public toilet, lift the seat to check for spiders. (2A)
- PLEASE WASH YOUR UNDERWEAR BEFORE WEARING (3A)
- PLEASE, PLEASE Check! (5B)

Commanding is a position that usually assigns power to the one who issues the command. Here, however, there are some issues we must consider. First, because the channel distances the sender from the reader, there is no way to know whether the latter will decide to comply or not. Second, most of the commands are modalized through the use of ‘please’, a type of entreaty modal adjunct that tends to realize requests. Besides, the importance of following the command tends to be expressed throughout the text, where legitimation is given in mythopoesis²⁵. Tenor relationship is then not one of power, but of friendship, where commands can be accepted as suggestions on how to behave for one’s own good.

²⁵ Aspects of mythopoesis will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Questions also seem to be an attempt to engage the reader in a less formal relationship, by creating a (false) sense of dialogism.

And how many people open up a tampon and inspect them? (7B)

Are you aware that Obama's middle name is Mohammed? (8A)

Do you know that to date Avian Flu affects birds only? (8B)

The answers to the questions, even if they are given by the reader, remain in the mental plane and have no effect on the sender's narration of the story. According to Longacre (1983), the purpose of such rhetorical questions can be to elicit attention, functioning hence essentially as a teaching device.

Similarly, the two occurrences of offers '*LET ME FORE WARN YOU*' (3A) and '*let me say*' (6A) appear as request for permission to tell the story, which is, in fact, already given.

Even though the commands, questions and offers found in the data seem to be a resource for construing the impression of a reciprocal relationship, "the most striking indication of power is in who gets to be speaker in an exchange, and for how long." (Eggins, 2004, p.184) Consequently, the power still lies with the sender, who holds the dominance of the speaker role.

4.3.2 MODALITY

The data presents very few occurrences of modalization. Most finites are temporal operators, but a few seem to modalize the statements in terms of necessity (need/have), prediction (will), possibility (could/would) and obligation (should).

The modal operators *need* and *have* are used to indicate necessity, and seem to justify the actions related to them. The following examples show a structure where the necessity of one action is explained by another action.

She needed to come inside to pay. (1A)

She needed to do something [to ask for help] (6B)

They'll have to do a D&C [...] to clean it all out. (7B)

Will is used to predict future events, as in '*[I] will be throwing out any that I have left*' (7B) and '*you will learn that*' (8A), but mostly its use indicates the consequences of (not) re-sending the e-mail.

Send this to your friends [...] so your friend will not be the next victim. (1A)

If you don't repost this saying "She was pushed" or "They pushed her down a sewer" Then Carmen will get you, either from a sewer, the toilet, the shower, or when you go to sleep you'll wake up in the sewer, in the dark, then Carmen will come and kill you. (10A)

Could and *would* generally appear to indicate possibility. It is interesting that *could* is used mostly to indicate the possibility of one to fall victim of the depicted deceit.

The father did the only thing he could think of (1B)

Ladies this could happen to you (3A)

Guys this could happen to your wife (3A)

Some sick person could do this (6A)

Could not catch her breath (6B)

Could have seriously injured her (6B)

I said I'd spread the word. (7B)

The holes would leave in time. (3A)

There are only two occurrences of *should*, and in both cases it represents an obligation. In '*I felt that I should share with you*' (3A) the reader feels obliged to inform other people about the reported events, while in '*The question that should set your TEETH on fire!*' (9A), the sender assumes it is an obligation for the reader to be appalled by such question.

The modal adjuncts found in the data appear both in proposals and in propositions. The most frequent, 'please', has eighteen occurrences, and these adjuncts are always used as a device to disguise commands as friendly requests.

Please check your chair when going to the movie theaters!!!! (5B)

Please Read!!!! (6A)

Please make sure that you wash the top with running water and soap (7A)

Please forward this message to the people you care about. (7A)

Please read and go to this church's website and read what is written there. (8A)

So please BEWARE, and also warn others. (3A)

Please make sure you iron your undergarments before you wear them (3A)

If you travel or someone close to you travels, please be careful. (3B)

Likewise, 'always', in its three occurrences, modulates commands. It does so by referring to the frequency in which behavior is expected.

ALWAYS lock your car doors (1A)

Always be aware of your surroundings (1A)

This is why it is important to ALWAYS carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas (7A)

In some of the examples above, cases of modulation are disguised as modalization, where commands are seen to be expressed more mildly as an offer of information (see Heberle, 1997 and Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

The occurrences of modal adjuncts in propositions are listed on the Table 4.5 below, following the types and meanings set forth by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.82).

Table 4.5 Modal Adjuncts in Propositions in Urban Legends

Example	Type	Meaning	Occurrences
Really	Persuasion	I assure you	4
Seriously	Persuasion	I assure you	1
Ever/never	Usuality	How often?	3
Usually	Usuality	How often?	1
Often	Usuality	How often?	1
Obviously	Obviousness	How obvious?	1
Clearly	Obviousness	How obvious?	1
To one's Surprise	Prediction	How expected?	1
Apparently	Presumption	I presume	1
Certainly	Probability	How likely?	1
Possibly	Probability	How likely?	1
Unfortunately	Desirability	How desirable?	1
Total			17

The use of such modal adjuncts presupposes deference to the opinion of the writer/sender. The writer/sender expresses his/her belief about the degree of certainty, usuality, obviousness and so on related to the reported information and expects agreement from the part of the reader.

Besides, such instances also carry judgments that might be shared among the participants involved in the interaction, which can be noticed in the following examples:

To think that Obama has even the slightest chance in the run for the presidency, is really scary. (8A)

Unfortunately, at some point during the long drive Grandma passed away (1B)

Which is toxic and obviously lethal!

You can clearly read her lips (9A)

Modality in ULs is also realized in a few grammatical metaphors. In such cases, a modality that would most usually be realized as a finite or an adjunct assumes the form of a separate clause.

It is now believed that (2A)

It is documented and confirmable (3B)

To think that Obama has (8A)

Make sure you iron your undergarments (3A)

Make sure you don't accept cards at any given time (6B)

All these examples create a distance between wording and meaning and consequently, a distance between interactants (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In the first three examples, the judgment of the writer acquires an objective status, as if it were not their opinion, but a fact. The examples from texts 3A and 6B are explicit modulations of obligation, where the necessity or the importance ('make sure') of performing an activity seems to be greater than the activities themselves ('iron' and don't accept'). Consequently, the power to ensure all measures are taken to avoid falling victim lies with the reader.

The overall lack of modalization in the texts indicates an important aspect of ULs. Following Halliday, Eggins points out that "it turns out that the more we say something is certain, the less certain it is" (2004, p. 175), so it may refer to the events being represented under a status of truth. After all, ULs, as previously explained, report on fabulous goings-on that must, in order to be transmitted forward, be believed by the readers.

4.4 FINAL REMARKS

The occurrence of different types of processes in ULs is related to the distribution of power to realize different social action among the represented participants. In addition, both the use of processes and aspects of MOOD and modality attempt to entitle the stories with a status of truth, at the same time distancing readers and senders from the reported events, but construing a friendly relationship among these two participants who can spread the information.

Victims are presented as having little power over other participants, except for the fact that they can inform other people of what has happened to them and consequently help readers avoid falling victim of the reported scam or deceit. At the same time, victims are people in mundane, everyday environments, and they express their feelings of discomfort and pain. As such, the reader can easily identify with the victim, both by believing s/he could be in the same place or situation and by feeling sensitive to the suffering of the other.

Deceivers are given power of agency over the victims, in the sense that they can deceit, injure and even kill them. They are also situated in the same mundane spaces as the victim, and either identified specifically by name (as is the case with business or celebrity legends), or generalized. Deceivers, hence, could be basically anyone, anywhere, adding to the feeling that senders and readers could easily become possible victims.

Legitimizers bring a sense of credibility to the story, where they fulfill their function as experts who can aid the victim or investigate the reported events. Moreover, these participants are able to explain what has happened from an expert position and report to the media as trusted witnesses.

Senders and readers are granted similar positions of power, in the sense that both can act in material processes in order to avoid falling victim of the reported scam, deceit or crime, and verbalize their knowledge of the alleged events by transmitting the message in order to help others. The sender also expresses his/her feelings about the reports and about the importance of spreading the warning. The reader, just having received the information, is given the Attributes of cautiousness and mental awareness needed to escape being subdued by deceivers.

Aspects of MOOD and modality follow what was expected from the genre. Since the stories are supposed to be reports of real events, they present similarities to a characteristic that has been found in news narratives, where the intent is informational and hence, ideational meanings are given preference over interpersonal and textual relations (Caldas-Coulthard, 1997).

For that reason, most clauses in the samples are statements to offer information on the reports. However, there are also several occurrences of commands issued from the sender to the reader. Such commands are, though, expressed as friendly suggestions. First, they either give instructions to the readers on how to avoid falling victim, or indicate the need to spread the message, and hence, following such commands would be in the reader's own interest. Second, the commands are mostly modalized through the use of 'please'.

Similarly, the use of questions and offers engage the reader in a seemingly dialogic communication, while uses of modality present judgments which are supposed to be shared by readers, creating a sense of equality in terms of the power assigned to the participants involved in the communication.

CHAPTER 5

ACTORS, ACTION AND LEGITIMATION IN URBAN LEGENDS

Urban Legends are fabulous narratives nonetheless told as factual. This raises a question: How can such unbelievable events be represented and accepted as true? The answer cannot be completely provided here, since it would, among other things, involve a herculean study on the reception of such texts that is way beyond the scope of the present study.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, however, texts construe meaning not only in *what* they portray but also in the way *how* the representation is shaped. Texts

not only represent what is going on, they also evaluate it, ascribe purposes to it, justify it, and so on, and in many texts these aspects of representation become far more important than the representation of the social practice itself. (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.6)

In this chapter, I tackle the matter of how such fabulous events are represented, focusing on the representation of social actors, social action, and legitimation.

5.1 PROCEDURES FOR THE ANALYSIS OF SOCIOSEMANTIC REPRESENTATIONAL ASPECTS IN URBAN LEGENDS

The analysis of representation of social actors, social action and legitimation in the data follows Van Leeuwen's (2008) sociosemantic categories. Van Leeuwen's previous studies (1996, 2008) on the matter have related such categories to specific grammatical and rhetorical realizations based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (2004), so the first step for the identification of the broader sociosemantic categories in the samples was to search specifically for the lexicogrammatical items that have been shown to expose them.

However, as van Leeuwen (2008) has pointed out, Halliday's lexicogrammatical headings do not correspond exactly to the sociosemantic categories because meanings can be construed at different linguistic levels. Sociological concepts, such as legitimation, can be

constrained to agents, as is the case with personal authorization, but may also extend to larger instances of text, as in moral evaluations.

There is, then, no explicit linguistically motivated method for identifying sociosemantic categories, and “As discourse analysts, we can only “recognize” them, on the basis of our commonsense cultural knowledge” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 110). Consequently, I have also trusted my careful and repeated reading of the samples for the recognition of such sociological concepts.

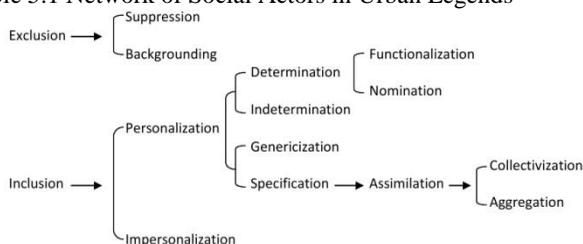
5.2 SOCIAL ACTORS IN URBAN LEGENDS

According to van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), social actors can be either excluded or included in representations. In ULs, excluded participants can be suppressed and completely left out or backgrounded to a position of less prominence. Included participants, on the other hand, are represented in several different ways. They can be impersonalized, treated as a non-human entity as in ‘*something*’, ‘*it*’, ‘*a needle*’ (5B), ‘*the spider*’ (2A) or personalized as in ‘*women*’ (2A), ‘*Daisy*’ (2B), ‘*a person*’ (3B), ‘*the professor*’ (10A).

When personalized, social actors can be determined or indetermined, genericized or specified. Determination appears either by nomination (‘*Carmen*’ 10A, ‘*Milagros Esteves*’ 4B, ‘*Carmen Winstead*’ 10A) or by functionalization, that is, by reference to its occupation or role (‘*doctors*’ 2A, ‘*an expert lipreader*’ 9A, ‘*paramedics*’ 9B, ‘*investigators*’ 2A). Indetermination represents social actors as anonymous and unspecific, whether they are individuals (‘*someone*’ 6B, ‘*some sick person*’ 6A, ‘*someone on the streets*’ 6B) or groups (‘*other individuals*’ 1A, ‘*the men*’ 6B, ‘*rodents*’ 7A).

Genericization treats social actors as part of a group, as in ‘*a friend*’ (1A), ‘*a guy*’ (1A), ‘*these women*’ (2A). Specification can quantify the actors (‘*3 women*’ 2A, ‘*5 girls*’ 10A), or assimilate them, both by aggregation, where they are referred to as the group itself (‘*humans*’ 8B, ‘*doctors*’ 2A, ‘*investigators*’ 2A, ‘*police*’ 4B) or by collectivization in the use of the collective pronouns ‘*you*’ (2A) or ‘*we*’ (3A). These main sets of social actors in ULs can be seen in the diagram below, adapted from van Leeuwen’s (1996) taxonomy.

Table 5.1 Network of Social Actors in Urban Legends



In the following sections, aspects of representation of social actors in ULs as excluded or included will be further examined and discussed.

5.2.1 EXCLUSION OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN URBAN LEGENDS

The exclusion of social actors in representations indicates that such participants are not relevant, so they may either be totally suppressed or backgrounded. While in some instances excluded participants simply cannot be identified, sometimes it is the author who chooses not to identify them (van Leeuwen, 1996).

In ULs, several participants are backgrounded simply because they are not important for the development of the narrative, so the focus lays on their actions instead of on who they are. In examples such as ‘*a waitress at the restaurant was rushed to the hospital*’ (2A), ‘*[he] went to a pole where there was a phone right there to make his announcement for all doors, and gates to be locked*’ (6A) and ‘*food stuffs are stored in warehouses [...] and then get transported to the retail outlets without being properly cleaned*’ (7A), the events described are part of the flow of the narration, but the actors who *rushed* the victim to the hospital, *locked* the doors and gates, and *stored, transported* or *not cleaned* the products are not as decisive to the plot as the actions themselves. It is not important who did the actions, but the fact that the actions were (or were not) performed.

Another case of exclusion found in the samples refers to the institutional affiliation of participants. Here, nominalizations such as ‘*the report is that*’ (1A), ‘*autopsy results showed*’ (2A) and ‘*a subsequent investigation revealed*’ or the reference to the names of institutions such as ‘*a brief investigation by the Center for disease Control in Atlanta discovered the cause*’ (7A), ‘*The N. J. County*

coroner's office will determine a cause of death' (9B) and *'The health department descended on the restaurant'* (2A) indicate scientific-like sources, which helps legitimize their actions. These nominalizations also impersonalize the text, creating a distant style that has previously been found in studies of other genres such as editorials in women's magazines (Heberle, 1997) and written media texts (van Leeuwen, 1996).

Finally, the source of the information spread by each individual UL may be excluded. Out of the twenty samples under study, eleven totally suppress its source. This exclusion of source and the nominalizations cited before indicate an important shift from the genre in its original oral format to the contemporary Internet based ULs. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, ULs spread in spoken mode tended to rely on the FOAF (friend of a friend) structure to legitimize the narrated events. It was then the closeness to source that made the representation believable. Internet age ULs, on the contrary, seem to be moving to an institutionalization of the source and consequently, a distancing of the reader. As noted by van Leeuwen (1996), the suppression of certain social actors (such as the suppression of the social actor who is the source of the information given in a UL) may give the representation a status of truth, "as something not to be further examined or contested" (p.41). This concurs with the lexicogrammatical analysis of aspects of MOOD and modality presented in Chapter 4, where it was found that their realizations in ULs tend to be based on categorical assertions and allow a low degree of doubt or indeterminacy.

5.2.2 INCLUSION OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN URBAN LEGENDS

Victims in ULs are frequently personalized, and the reference to them is most commonly realized through proper names and the associated personal or possessive pronouns, or by nouns that represent them as human beings.

Nominations such as *'anthropologist Susan McKinley'* (3A), *'Milagros Esteves'* (4B), *'Carmen Winstead'* (10A), *'Daisy'* (2B), *'Obama'* (8A), *'Michelle Obama'* (9A), and *'Jon Bon Jovi'* (9B) represent participants as specific identities. The nomination of victims appears in seven out of the twenty samples. This indicates such characters play an important role in the story (van Leeuwen, 1996), and in ULs this determination of who the victim is may add to the credibility

of the reported events since proper names could virtually be retrieved and hence, the facts could be checked.

Most of the times, however, the victims are genericised. They then appear as part of a group, and are consequently

symbolically removed from the reader's world of immediate experience, treated as distant 'others' rather than as people 'we' have to deal with in our everyday lives (van Leeuwen, 1996, p.48)

This is true since the reader does not know '*a friend*' (1A), '*the lady*' (1A; 6B), '*a lawyer*' (2A), '*the traveller*' (3B) or '*a female*' (6B) who have fallen victim of the reported scam or deceit, so these victims are distant from the receivers of such narratives. On the other hand, genericisation allows the reader to relate to the victim. After all, one could never become '*David Gregory*' (10A), but can, with relative ease, empathize with '*the girl*' (4B), '*the woman*' (5A), '*a victim*' (6B) or '*a business traveller*' (3B).

In four of the samples victims are not only represented as being part of a group, but as the group itself. These cases specify the victims as '*3 women*' (2A), or assimilate them through aggregation in '*girls/women's*' (1A), '*the women*' (1A), '*all of the other victims*' (2A), '*business travelers*' (3B) and '*humans*' (8B). This backgrounds the individuality of the social actors and, according to van Leeuwen (1996), this choice in meaning making can be used to manufacture consent.

Deceivers are not always human. Consequently, some degree of impersonalization was expected. However, ULs, similarly to traditional legends, allow for non-human entities to be anthropomorphized, that is, assigned human qualities, as in sample 2B, where the dog called Daisy '*knew there were others who were trapped*'. Consider the example in sample 5B:

An incident occurred when a friend's coworker went to sit in a chair and something was poking her. She then got up and found that it was a needle with a little note at the end. It said: "Welcome to the world of AIDS."

Doctors tested the needle and it was HIV POSITIVE!

BE CAUTIOUS WHEN GOING TO THE MOVIES!!!!

If you must go to the movies, PLEASE, PLEASE Check! One of the safest ways is NOT sticking your hands between the seats, but moving the seat up and down and really look! Most of us just plop down into the seats.

One can infer that the infected needle was placed on the movie theater seat by a human entity. That actor is, however, totally suppressed. The deceiver is then referred to as '*something*', '*it*', '*a*

needle with a note at the end'. This entity, presented as non-human, is not only endowed the ability to deceive the victim but also actively performs the dynamic force in the contamination: '*something was poking her*'.

This sample also exemplifies the importance of how social actors are represented to the construction of the plot. Notice that in a first moment, the deceiver is an indetermined '*something*' that only raises curiosity in the victim who decides to check on what it is. The victim then realizes it is '*a needle*', where the object is genericised. Only after the description '*it was a needle with a little note at the end. It said: "Welcome to the world of AIDS"*' is presented, '*the needle*' is identified in terms of what it is: '*HIV POSITIVE!*'.

Because of anthropomorphization, then, some of these impersonal actors are nominated, a characteristic most commonly related to personalization, as in '*the South American Blush Spider (arachnius gluteus)*' (2A), '*BURUNDANGA*' (6B) and '*the new Tampax Pearl*' (7B). Deceivers, however, are hardly nominated. Only five out of the twenty samples determine the deceiver in such a way. The other two examples of nominations refer to personalizations: '*Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush*' (8B) and '*Carmen*'(10A). It is noteworthy that in two of these four examples, nomination can be expected because of the nature of the type of UL the sample represents. As previously explained in chapter 3, sample 7B is an example of business and professional legends, also known as brand-name legends, while sample 8B is a legend about government, similar to conspiracy theories. In 7B then, it is expected that the name of the brand might appear explicitly in the text: '*Tampax Pearl*'. In 8B, the names '*Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush*' indicate what government is being talked about. Besides, in 8B, only one of the three cited names is explained: '*DONALD RUMSFELD, the present Secretary of Defense of the USA*'. The other two, '*Cheney*' and '*Bush*' are simply assumed to be known by the readers and seem to require no further explanation.

Except for the examples discussed so far, deceivers tend to be either genericised or indeterminate. Genericisations such as '*a guy*' (1A), '*a man*' (5A, 6B), '*these larvae*' (3A), '*a person*' (3B) and '*the stranger*' (5A); and indeterminations such as '*other individuals*' (1A), '*some sick person*' (6A), '*whoever this person was*' (6A) and '*someone on the streets*' (6B) are the most frequent way in which these participants are referred to, creating an overall feeling that the deceiver can be anyone, anywhere. When the social actor is anonymous, its identity is treated as irrelevant (van Leeuwen, 1996), and consequently

the focus moves to the social action they perform, as we shall see in section 5.3.

Legitimizers are either nominated or genericized and functionalized. When nominated, they are represented in terms of their unique identities, by their proper nouns. In the samples, nominations of the legitimizers are formal, where only the surname is presented, or semi-formal, that is, given name and surname. There are no instances of informal nominations, where only the first name is given. Besides, all instances of nominations are named either by addition of standard titles such as '*Dr. Lynch*' (3A), or by affiliation to an institution, as in '*Mayor Guilaini*' (2B) and '*New Jersey Fire Department-First Aid Captain Douglas Gray*' (9B).

Most of the times, however, legitimizers are genericized, presented as members of a class, and more than that, they are categorized in terms of the functions they share with the peer group, their occupation or role. The most frequent instances refer to the doctors, who appear in these stories to fulfill the function of experts, and are referred to as '*doctors*' (2A, 4B, 5B), '*the doctor*' (2A, 3A, 5A, 7A, 7B) and '*a doctor*' (3A). Their specialization can be further specified, in '*one toxicologist*' (2A), '*the dermatologist*' (3A) and '*her OB-Gyn*' (7B). Other examples of functionalization are '*the 911 operator*' (3B), '*an expert lipreader*' (9A), '*paramedics*' (9B) and '*investigators*' (2A).

Possible victims in ULs are always collectivized. Not all the samples explicitly mention possible victims, but in the twelve texts that do, ten refer to them through the personal pronoun '*you*' (2A, 3B, 5B, 6B, 7A, 7B, 8A, 8B, 10A) or the possessive '*your*' (2A, 5B, 6A) where the possessed item is part of the possessor, as in '*your life*' (2A) or '*your hands*' (5B). Only in four samples the sender includes him/herself as part of the endangered group with the use of the personal pronoun '*we*' (3A, 8B) or the subject pronoun '*us*' (5B, 7A). That may be due to the fact that, since the sender has already been warned about the reported threat, he/she can avoid falling victim. In this sense, once the reader assumes the position of an 'I' who shares the story, he/she is immediately excluded from the group of '*you*' who still need to be warned. The infrequent use of '*we*', and the persistent employment of '*you*' may then simply be a device to create the idea of a united group of people who may be victims, separate from the group of '*they*' who may be deceivers. At the same time, senders and readers are still part of a group of '*we*', people who either deserve to be warned, or take the responsibility of warning others simply because they do not associate to the opposed group of '*they*' who are deceivers.

Other examples of collectivization of possible victims that appear in the samples point to the representation of women as more vulnerable members of society in comparison to men. While in some instances the gender of the possible victim is not clear, as in *'everyone you care about'* (2A), or *'our family & friends'* (8A), most of the time the possible victim is clearly a female: *'Ladies'* (1A, 3A, 7B), *'women'* (1A, 7B), *'wife'* (3A), *'sisters'* (3A, 6B), *'females'* (1A, 6B) and *'girls'* (1A, 3A, 6B), just to mention a few.

5.3 THE REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTION IN URBAN LEGENDS

The ways in which social action is represented play an important role in most texts, since they can indicate particular kinds of discourse. Van Leeuwen (2008) presents a descriptive framework for the analysis of the representation of social action, offering six sociosemantic categories: reaction, material and semiotic action, objectivation and description, deagentialization, generalization and abstraction, and overdetermination. Out of the six, two show great importance for the construal of meaning in ULs and will be discussed in turn in the following sections: reactions and material action.

5.3.1 REACTIONS IN URBAN LEGENDS

In Urban Legends, the victim is the participant who expresses most emotive reactions. As could be seen in section 4.2.4, victims are Sensors in 50% of the total mental clauses. This indicates their lack of power over the represented events, which consequently stresses their inability to escape falling victim of the threats.

She quickly dismissed it believing that the holes would leave in time [...] what she didn't know was that the holes were in fact deeper than she had originally thought (3A)

The last thing the traveler remembers until they wake up in a hotel room bath tub (3B)

She got asked a date by one guy she really liked, so on the day of the date she wanted to look pretty (4B)

She tried to open the window and realized that the odor was on her hand [...] she then noticed the men were immediately behind her (6B)

Deceivers, on the other hand are granted a great power since there is only one instance where they act as Senser: *'Bush's friends decide that the medicine TAMIFLU is the solution for a pandemic that has not yet occurred'* (8B). If we look closely at this example, even though

‘decide’ is a mental process, it does not express a reaction, but on the contrary, it indicates the deceivers’ power of decision over what is best for other people.

Readers and senders together amount to 28% of occurrences of mental processes.

Be aware [...] so please BEWARE (3A)

I felt that I should share with you (3A)

[I] don’t know about the husband (4A)

I know a yeast infection is an awful thing to experience (7B)

I found this interesting (8A)

Are you aware that Obama’s middle name is Mohammed? (8A)

You know how it’s done... with reverence and respect (9A)

This high quantity of emotional reactions indicates little power over the events, a position that will be further discussed in the next section.

5.3.2 MATERIAL ACTION IN URBAN LEGENDS

The data shows that in Urban Legends, even though victims perform more material actions than deceivers, as previously shown in section 4.2.1, the deceivers’ actions tend to be more transactional and such transactions usually extend to the victim.

Sample 6A exemplifies the power granted to deceivers over the victims. It is clear that the deceiver ‘*whoever this person was*’, performed a series of material transactional actions upon the victim:

Whoever this person was, took the little girl, brought her into the bathroom, shaved half her head intending to shave it all, undressed her in less than 10 min.

Victims, on the other hand, tend to act in less transactional actions, and when they do act in transactional ones, they are usually extended to objects, not to other human beings, as can be seen in the following extract from sample 1A:

A friend stopped at a pay-at-the-pump gas station to get gas. Once she filled her gas tank after paying at the pump and started to leave the attendant inside came over the speaker.

Readers, senders and possible victims, who are actors in over 17% of the material processes, are also granted little power, since their transactions extend to objects, and not to other human beings. They can ‘*lift the seat to check for spiders*’ (2A), ‘*wash all bras, underwear*’ (3A), ‘*carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas or drinks*’ (7A), ‘*don’t go alone*’ (1A), ‘*check! [...] moving the seat up and down and really look!*’ (5B), ‘*take heed and make sure you don’t accept cards*’ (6B),

‘open up a tampon and inspect them’ (7B) all in order to avoid falling victim of the threat, but the only real power they have over other human beings is verbal: that of transmitting the warning.

5.4 LEGITIMATION IN URBAN LEGENDS

Urban Legends not only represent events and people but they also legitimize or delegitimize social practices. In this sense, they offer “answers to the spoken or unspoken questions “Why should we do this?” or “Why should we do this in this way?”” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 105). In the following sections, each type of legitimation and the way in which they are represented in ULs will be further discussed.

5.4.1 AUTHORIZATION IN URBAN LEGENDS

Authority is closely related to the relation of power between discourse participants. In the data, participants with authoritative power have previously, in the TRANSITIVITY analysis, been categorized as Legitimizers, so now they will be further discussed in terms of who they are and the power they hold.

The three types of authority granted to people: personal, expert and role model appear in the data. The table below shows who these legitimizers are and the way in which they are lexically represented.

Table 5.2 The representation of personal, expert and role model authority in urban legends.

Sample	Personal	Expert	Role Model
1A	The attendant		
2A		One toxicologist Investigators	
2B			Mayor Guilaini
3A		The doctor Dr. Lynch The dermatologist	
3B	The 911 operator		
4A	A sweet friend		
4B		doctors	
5A		The doctor	
5B		doctors	
7A		The doctors	
7B		Her doctor OB-Gyn My friend’s doctor	
9A		An expert lipreader	
9B	The sources Ruda	Paramedics New Jersey Fire Department- First Aid Captain Douglas Gray The detectives	

Role model authorization appears only once in the data. ‘*Mayor Guilaini*’ (2B), is a clear reference to Rudolph Giuliani, Mayor of New York City at the time of the World Trade Center disaster which is the setting for the story. He is the one who ‘*rewards Daisy with the canine medal of Honor of new York*’ (2B). Since Rudolph Giuliani was elected to be the representative of the people in the city where the incident is reported to have happened, one can assume he is an opinion leader in that community. Besides, in the sample, he is given the power to give out a medal, which is reserved to people in the higher ranks of society.

Mentioning the Mayor’s name in this text seems then to assume an important role. Because a significant other in the peer group has valued the dog’s heroism to such an extent as to award it with a medal of honor, it must be the case that everyone should value it so. While most people cannot reward the dog with such an honor, they can still show their pride by spreading the message and making the dog’s deeds known.

Expert authority, the one reserved for people who have some type of expertise on the subject matter, is the most frequent in the data. In the TRANSITIVITY analysis (Ch.4) we saw that legitimizers tend to perform either verbal or material processes, as in ‘*Dr. Lynch could not diagnose the infection and told Susan to seek the aid of one of his colleagues*’ (3A). When performing verbal processes, experts appear in the data to fulfill two specific roles. They either explain what happened to the victim, or they report on the happening to the media. This can be seen in the following examples. Notice how, in sample 2B, the fireman both explains and reports to the media:

He was rushed to the emergency at Pali Nomi, where they said he was suffering from massive organ failure! (7A)

They [the doctors] said there is a virus (much like Hanta virus) that lives in dried rat and mouse droppings. (7A)

“She lead us to the right people, before she got injured” the fireman explained. (2B)

New Jersey Fire Department-First aid Captain Douglas Grey told The Times that paramedics responded to a 911 call from the home. (9B)

When performing material processes, experts use their knowledge of the subject to investigate the facts being presented or try to help:

That is when one toxicologist, remembering an article he had read, drove out to the restaurant, went into the restroom, and lifted the toilet seat. (2A)

When police arrived they could reconstruct the girls last moments.’ (4B)

Doctors tested the needle (5B)

The doctor, not knowing the exact severity of the disease, gave her antibiotics and special creams. (3A)

She went to the doctor, who examined her (5A)

The fact that experts investigated the events reported in the story and were involved in trying to help the victims adds to its credibility. However, it is worth mentioning the reference to expert doctors. In sample 3A, the victim visits three different doctors until one is able to diagnose her. In sample 7B, there are five visits to two different doctors and they still are not able to really find out how to treat the victim. Doctors' inability to put their expertise in practice does not de-authorize them, though. In both cases it adds to the seriousness of the problem and to the risk people are facing in not taking the warning seriously.

Personal authority is inherent to the status of a person in the specific context being represented, and needs no explicit justification, as we can see in the following examples:

He [the attendant] told her that while she was pumping gas, a guy slipped into the back seat of her car (1A)

The 911 operator tells them to remain still, having already sent paramedics to help. (3B)

She (a sweet friend) just found out that one of her best friends in San Antonio, Yolanda Bear, had a daughter at Virginia Tech that was killed yesterday. (4A)

The sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Bon Jovi team rushed to Bon Jovi's bedside (9B)

In all these examples, the person is given authority because somehow they have knowledge on the subject which others do not. Sample 1A reports a gang initiation ritual that involves a criminal entering the car of the victim at a service station. Consequently one can expect that the service station attendant, who works in this environment daily, would know about the deceit. The same thing happens with the 911 operator in sample 3B. Only his power is further justified in the text as someone '*who has become quite familiar with this crime.*' On samples 4A and 9B, we find no explanation for the authority of '*the sweet friend*' or '*the sources*'. However, in both cases these people can also be seen as more knowledgeable, since the '*friend*' is acquainted with the mother of the victim and '*the sources*' must have been chosen by the alleged reporters because they had apparently truthful information to give.

As previously discussed in section 5.2.1, nominalizations can exclude the social actors and focus on the institutions they represent. Hence, in examples such as '*the Health department*' (2A), '*the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta*' (7A) and '*Police*' (4B), there is some

degree of impersonalization of the legitimation. Because in these cases no law, rule or regulation is referred to, they cannot be considered ‘impersonal authority’ under van Leeuwen’s (2008) point of view. I do however understand that they are somewhere in between personal and impersonal authorization, since the institutions mentioned are regulators in society, and even if they do not decide on what the rules are, it is their responsibility to reinforce the established regulations. I suggest, consequently, that personal/impersonal authorization can be seen not as a matter of two separate and unrelated categories, but as a continuum, allowing for different degrees of personalization.

In this midterm I also position the media. Sample 2A indicates that the information has already been shown in the news: ‘*If you haven’t already heard about it in the news, here is what happened.*’ From this sentence one can infer that if the media has talked about it, then it must be true. Similarly, sample 8A says ‘*I cannot believe this has not been all over the TV and newspapers*’, suggesting the information is not only truthful but also important enough to be largely spread by the most traditional means of information. Any suggestion that an UL has been reported by the media cannot be immediately considered as untruthful, though. Brunvand (1981, 1998, 2001), in his extensive study of ULs, has frequently found that mass media can become an unwilling participant in the dissemination of these stories. While tabloids sometimes publish such sensational narratives as “pseudo news items” (Brunvand, 2001), talk shows and radio transmissions that are supposed to debunk the legends may end up being half-heard by the public (ibid.) who believes them to be accounts of reality since they were shown by the media.

Tradition is another type of impersonal legitimation. It is the case that, simply because the custom has always been this, it should not be challenged. In sample 9A, Michelle Obama is accused of devaluing a traditional custom:

There she sat on Barack’s right side as bagpipers played and an honor guard folded an American Flag. You know how it’s done... with reverence and respect, folded precisely and crisply. . . honored. It was during that moment that our nations "First Lady" leaned to her husband’s ears and asked the question that should set your TEETH on fire! All of this for a damned flag?

In this example, the custom refers to the way in which the country’s flag should be treated, according to a set of observances that must be followed. Because the ‘*First lady*’ has both disrespected the

tradition itself, and also cursed on the flag, she is heavily criticized as an *'anti American socialist blathering FOOL'*.

Similarly, in conformity authorization, when a behavior is considered to be common, it is accepted as legitimate. Some of the samples justify the actions that lead a person to fall victim in this way: *'One thing led to another, as they say, and she ended up having sex with him'* (5A), *'Most of us remember to wash vegetables and fruit but never think of boxes and cans'* (7A) and *'And how many people open up a tampon and inspect them?'* (7B), for example. In such cases, the victim is not considered guilty of carelessness, simply because s/he was acting as everyone else does. It may suggest, then, that there are no specific reasons why these people were vulnerable, and moreover, that anyone acting in conformity with the common standards can also be in a susceptible position.

Besides, believing and resending the message can also be seen as a position of conformity. This position is usually not explicit in the texts, but can be clearly noticed in sample 7B. The narrative begins by *'a woman I work with started using the new Tampax Pearl 5 months ago and that's when she started getting yeast infections'* and follows to describe the worsening of the symptoms and the enduring suffering of the victim. Later, it introduces another character who is supposedly suffering the initial symptoms, but after being warned about the victim's state, can avoid being caught in the same situation *'Another girl that I work with also has been using them for a few months and has been having problems, but couldn't figure it out. She won't be using them anymore.'* Besides, the sender herself takes a position of conformity when she says *'I have used a few, just to try them, but will be throwing out any that I have left.'* And at the end, when she reports that the victim *'told me and every woman she knows in order to get the word out, so no one else has to go through this. I said I'd spread the word.'* Consequently, the reader is presented with three women who believe the story and take some kind of action upon it, which can be either not using the product, and/or informing other possible victims of it. The resending of the e-mail can hence be seen as a result of conforming to the actions of other people, and the logic behind that would then be *'if everyone else is believing the story and doing what it says, why shouldn't I?'*

5.4.2 RATIONALIZATION, MORAL EVALUATIONS AND MYTHOPOESIS IN URBAN LEGENDS

In some ULs, the rules that should be followed and the consequent punishment for those who decide not to follow them are very explicit. Sample 1A, for example, starts by reporting a near-disaster event where a lady stops at the gas station and is saved by the attendant who sees a man getting into the backseat of her car and prevents her from going back in. It follows then to explain that there are gang initiations where the new members must kidnap, kill and dismember women. The message is clearly stated:

1. ALWAYS lock your car doors, even if you're gone for just second.
2. Check underneath your car when approaching it for reentry, and check in the back before getting in.
3. Always be aware of your surroundings and other individuals in your general vicinity, particularly at night!

This is just one example from a series of stories where people, and more specifically women, are put in a situation of vulnerability when they wander alone and at nighttime. In its variations, the assailant might be hiding under the car, the location can be a parking lot and the intent may not be to kill the victim, but simply to disable her in order to steal her possessions (Brunvand, 1993). One frequent element, however, is that *'they are cutting the lady's ankles to disable them'* (1A). Aiming at the victim's Achilles tendons has long been an element that suggests a serious incapacitation, and consequent inability of self defense. The Greek hero Achilles, described by Homer in the Iliad as the greatest warrior in the Trojan War, was subdued after an arrow hit his heel. As a result of the legend, the expression Achilles heel came to mean a fatal vulnerability that, as we can see, is still an important element in this contemporary legend.

The vulnerability of being alone is also represented in samples 6B and 3B. In 6B, the victim, also a female, goes through another near disaster situation when she *'out of kindness'* (6B) accepts a business card from a *'gentleman'* (6B), again at a gas station. The card has some type of drug in it, and the deceivers then follow the victim's car waiting until the drug takes effect and incapacitate her. The lady, however, realizes she is being followed and, as she starts to feel dizzy, drives into a driveway and honks for help, scaring the assailants away. A moral evaluation here delegitimizes the lady's acceptance of the card. While being kind to other people, friends and strangers alike, may be generally well seen, in this narrative it is the element that puts the victim in

danger. Even though the man may act or look like a gentleman, he is a stranger, and in contemporariness strangers represent a threat, hence rules of good behavior must not apply to them.

This introduces the figure of the stranger, a person who is present, shares the same geographical and social spaces, but is unfamiliar to us. Sample 3B reports *'on a new crime ring that is targeting business travelers'* (3B). While the gender of the victim is never specified, the vulnerability of the victim lays again on its loneliness, and the night time.

The crime begins when a business traveler goes to a lounge for a drink at the end of the work day. A person in the bar walks up as they sit alone and offers to buy them a drink. The last thing the traveler remembers until they wake up in a hotel room bath tub, their body submerged to their neck in ice, is sipping that drink.

It is then explained that the victim had both kidneys harvested by the stranger, member of a crime ring that is *'well organized, well funded, [and] has very skilled personnel'* (3B). Since organization, funding and skillfulness can be considered desired characteristics of any enterprise, the constitution of crime ring in itself is positively evaluated²⁶, so the description adds to the credibility of the plot. Besides, it suggests that the person who lured the victim may not be acting alone, but as part of a group of strangers who put the lonely victim in a position of great disadvantage. This idea of a group of 'others' is common. In Sample 1A, it is a gang initiation ritual that leads to the event; in 6B, the lady is approached by *'a gentleman'*, but when she realizes she is being followed, it is by *'men'*; and in 3B, it is *'a crime ring'*. This supports Brunvand's (2001) proposition that some legends represent an American paranoia about gang activity.

Nevertheless, deceivers do appear as single individuals also. In Sample 6A, *'some sick person'* tries to abduct a child from her mother in a shopping place. In yet another use of the near disaster formula, the child is found, *'crunched in a bathroom stall, her head was half shaved, and she was dressed in her underwear with a bag of clothes, a razor, and wig sitting on the floor right besides her'*. The warning is clear: *'Please keep an eye out for your kids when going to these shopping places'*. Stories like this emphasize the vulnerability of children and the mother's responsibility in caring for them. Besides, such stories suggest that ill intended strangers share the same public spaces as their victims

²⁶ Note it is the organization of the crime ring that is positively evaluated, not its intents, actions or effects.

or possible victims. As we have seen before, they can be at the gas station (1A, 6B), the bar (3B) and now the shopping place (6A). Sample 6B goes beyond and suggests not even at home are we safe. It advises the reader not to accept business cards at any time and *'this applies to those making house calls'* (6B).

Deceivers can also be non-malevolent individuals, though. Consider Sample 5A:

A friend of a friend met a man while out on the town one night. One thing led to another, as they say, and she ended up having sex with him. Later, the woman fell ill. She went to the doctor, who examined her and announced that she was "infected with corpse-worms" (maggots). A subsequent investigation revealed that the stranger she had slept with was a pathologist in a local hospital. He had fornicated with a decomposing corpse earlier that same day.

Even though the stranger did not have any intentions of doing harm, and is clearly not a professional criminal as in the previous examples, the fact is the woman had sex with a stranger, and is consequently punished for it. Toropov (2001) suggests that this type of story reflects "insecurities regarding the open expression of eroticism by women" (p.202), and hence "the grave physical injury she sustains may be symbolic of her ruined reputation" (p.258).

As previously discussed in section 5.2, several samples present social actors which are not human. Sample 2A, for example, reports about several people who died after being bitten by spiders that live in toilet rims. While the explicit warning is *'before you use a public toilet, lift the seat to check for spiders'*, a careful reading indicates the story is not only about the venomous creatures, but about their origin.

Investigators discovered that the flight he was on had originated in South America. The Civilian Aeronautics Board (CAB) ordered an immediate inspection of the toilets of all flights from South America, and discovered the Blush spider's nests on 4 different planes! It is now believed that these spiders can be anywhere in the country.

The spider personalizes the outsider – the stranger from a foreign land that may invade our geographic space and contaminate us with whatever venom they bring along. Similarly, in sample 3A, the woman who had her breast infested with larvae is an anthropologist who had just returned from *'an expedition in South America'*. The text adds: *'It has been reported that this is happening in Zimbabwe as well'*.

Besides, in this sample, mythopoesis seem to assume a very important role. The narrative works as to legitimize the warning; however, the narrative does not exactly support the warning. The warning is that women should wash their recently bought underwear in

boiling water before wearing them. The story, however, says the victim went back home from South America and started developing the symptoms which were later found to be the result of a larvae infestation in her breast - nowhere it tells us how the victim got infected.

The warning is energetic, and employs several different techniques to call the reader's attention. A great part of it is written in capital letters, the clauses are short, there are several repetitions of the same pieces of information, and it offers personal evaluations by the writer, such as '*it is horrible*', '*this is so squimish*' and '*it is so grotesque*', among others.

It is horrible. Guys tell your wife, sisters, girlfriends, and girl cousins wash bra before wearing.

ALL PLEASE WASH ALL BRAS, UNDERWEAR WHEN YOU BUY BEFORE WEARING THEM. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT PARASITE IS IN OUR CLOTHES WHEN WE BUY THEM. FORWARD TO EVERYBODY YOU KNOW. LET ME FORE WARN YOU THIS IS SO SQUIMISH, I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS CRAWLING ALL OVER ME EVEN AS I SEND THIS TO YOU. BE AWARE. IT IS SO GROTESQUE. PLEASE WASH YOUR UNDERWEAR BEFORE WEARING. PREFERABLY IN BOILING HOT WATER.

This is not for the weak; I have never seen anything like this. Read the article first before looking at the picture. This looks horrible. Oh my God!!!!!!! Ladies this could happen to you and Guys this could happen to your wife, girlfriend, partner so please BEWARE, and also warn others.

The story is also striking. It narrates the development of the symptoms in parallel with the victim's search for medical help. In total, she visits three different doctors, each time going to a more specialized one. First she sees '*a doctor*', then '*a more certified doctor*' and finally '*a dermatologist*'. Each time it reports on the doctors' inability to diagnose her. Expressions of time '*upon her return*', '*as time lapsed*', '*she waited for two weeks*' and then '*finally*' indicate the development of the plot.

After anthropologist Susan McKinley came back home from an expedition in South America, she noticed a very strange rash on her left breast. Nobody knew what it was and she quickly dismissed it believing that the holes would leave in time. Upon her return she decided to see a doctor after she started developing intense pains. The doctor, not knowing the exact severity of the disease, gave her antibiotics and special creams. As time lapsed the pain did not subside and her left breast became more inflamed and started to bleed.

She decided to bandage her sores however as Susan's pain grew more intense she decided to seek help from a more certified doctor. Dr. Lynch could not diagnose the infection and told Susan to seek the aid of one of his colleagues who specialized in dermatology whom was sadly on vacation. She waited for two weeks and finally was able to react the dermatologist.

Sadly, a life changing event was about to unfold during her appointment. To Miss McKinley's surprise, after she removed the bandages, they found larva growing and squirming within the pores and sores of her breast. Sometimes these wicked creatures would all together simultaneously move around into different crevices.

What she didn't know was that the holes were in fact, deeper than she had originally thought for these larvae were feeding off the fat, tissue, and even milk canals of her bosom.

As a result, even though the narrative does not clearly state that these creatures can be in the underwear the reader might buy, or how the contamination may occur, it is best to be careful, simply because the representation is so horrible that nobody would want to risk it.

The contamination motif is frequent in business related legends. Brunvand (2001, p. 91) explains that

Contamination legends reflect distrust of products that are imported, ethnic, or manufactured and that are distributed by large corporations. The stories may also derive partly from people's guilt for relying too much on packaged and fast foods instead of preparing more nutritious meals at home from fresh ingredients. Concern about hygiene in places where food is packaged, stored, and prepared is already somewhat shaken by news reports of unclean conditions revealed in official inspections; the contamination legends focus on, exaggerate, and stereotype the findings.

Sample 7B exemplifies the distrust on large corporations. It reports on the suffering of a woman who, after using '*the new Tampax Pearl*' for five months, started to have strange and very uncomfortable symptoms which later are explained to be '*the fibers from the tampon*', which were '*cutting her and making her bleed*'.

Sample 7A, on the other hand, exemplifies concerns about hygiene. It tells the story of a stock clerk who mysteriously dies after complaining that '*the storeroom was really filthy*'. It later explains the warehouse was infested with rodents and that dried rat's urine and droppings are '*toxic and obviously lethal*'. It goes on to warn the reader:

The ugly truth is... even the most modern, upper-class, super store has rats and mice. And their Warehouse most assuredly does. Whenever you buy any canned soft drink, please make sure that you wash the top with running water and soap, or if not available, drink with a straw. A family friend's friend died after drinking a can of soda!

Contamination is also a motif in AIDS related legends. Such legends may talk explicitly about sex, when a person has a sexual encounter with a stranger who purposefully infects other people with the HIV virus, but the contamination can also be result of carelessness in the use of public items such as pay phone change slots, gas pump handles or sales machines just to name a few.

Sample 5B narrates the story of a person who is infected by a contaminated needle on the seat of a movie theater. After the victim feels the prick, he/she finds a needle with a note attached to it that says '*Welcome to the world of AIDS*'²⁷. Even though hidden needle variations do not refer to the sexual act, they are nonetheless included under the heading 'legends about sex' because the needle works as a metaphor for the phallus (Toropov, 2001). Consequently, such stories are still considered to be about the risks of sexuality (Toropov, 2001; Brunvand, 2001).

In some of these last examples, it is noticeable that anthropomorphism and personification are used to hide a social actor and hence focus on the delegitimation of the social action itself. Sample 5B disregards the person who placed the needle at the movie theater; in 7A and 7B, one can suppose that in the companies there should be some employee responsible for the safety of the products they sell. In 7A, the moral evaluation is clear: '*the storeroom was really filthy*'.

Symbolization is clear in legends about governments, where a subversion of the expected order is presented. These legends present the institutional establishments they refer to as "bloated, inefficient, aloof, indifferent to citizens' needs, inclined to conspiracies, and often out of step with most people's values" (Brunvand, 2001, p. 176). Predominantly, they symbolize the power held by people who represent governmental institutions, which also allows them to cover-up any actions that go against the common good. Besides, such ULs show the

²⁷ The ominous message is a classic narrative element that appears in the Bible, Daniel 5:5 (cited in Brunvand, 2001).

representatives of the people as human beings, with their own interests and greed.

Sample 8A accuses Barack Obama, then a candidate for American presidency, of being ‘*Certainly a racist*’ and ‘*possibly a covert worshiper of the Muslim faith*’, due to his relations to ‘*the Trinity Church of Christ*’. It says such church has a ‘*non-negotiable commitment to Africa*’ and it also suggests that the congregation only accepts black people as members. The text goes on to conclude that Obama’s interest then, is not in America, but in ‘*a Black Africa*’.

Sample 8B is more similar to conspiracy theories, as it refers to a group of people that make use of their position of power to take financial advantage from the citizens, not only American, but worldwide. According to the text, the ‘*Bird Flu*’ pandemic is a creation from the President of The United States (‘*Bush*’), the Secretary of Defense of that same country (‘*Rumsfeld*’) and one of their friends (‘*Cheney*’), who would, due to their relations to a large drug company, profit from the sales of the medicine used to treat the disease.

Politicians are not the only well-known people that figure in ULs, though. Celebrities are frequent elements in these stories and it has been suggested that stories about them “may play to some insecurity or fear that we hold at a very deep level” (Toropov, 2001, p.69), as death for example.

Sample 9B reports on the demise of ‘*Rockstar Jon Bon Jovi (John Francis Bongiovi, Jr)*’. It states he suffered a cardiac arrest, but also indicates the cause of death is unknown, and will be investigated both by the coroner’s office, who can supposedly conduct an autopsy, and by detectives, who ‘*plan to interview relatives, friends and Bon Jovi’s doctors to try to figure out what happened.*’ This reference to further investigation allows the reader to wonder what the cause of death really was, since natural causes are clearly dismissed.

Death, a common motif in ULs is usually presented as the consequence for socially unaccepted behavior. In sample 4A, a father runs over his child while ‘*trying to hurry to get loaded up and go to the airport*’. The reason for his haste – the fact that the older child had been killed in another location – does not justify his lack of attention and care for his offspring, and death is the consequence.

Sample 4B presents the story of a girl who had a date, so, because ‘*she wanted to look pretty*’, decided to dry her hair in the microwave oven and died ‘*by boiled brain*’. Toropov (2001) points out that dreadful consequences to narcissism abide in folklore, and refer to a folk tale

from the thirteenth century, where a woman spent so long embellishing her hair that the devil placed spiders on her hairdo.

Finally, death can be the consequence for not spreading the UL one has received. Sample 10A tells the story of ‘*Carmen*’, a girl who was accidentally killed by some classmates who, in an attempt to embarrass her, pushed her down a sewer opening. The classmates reported to the authorities that she fell, so the vengeful ghost of Carmen wants the truth to be exposed. It says:

If you don't repost this saying "She was pushed" or "They pushed her down a sewer" Then Carmen will get you, either from a sewer, the toilet, the shower, or when you go to sleep you'll wake up in the sewer, in the dark, then Carmen will come and kill you.

5.4.3 MULTIMODAL LEGITIMATION IN URBAN LEGENDS

Contemporary Urban Legends rely mostly on written language for the construal of meaning. Because their transmission mode is the e-mail, they can, however, make use of different technologies becoming hence multimodal. The Internet allows meaning to be expressed by means other than verbal language, such as images, moving images, symbols or even aspects of intertextuality which are, in ULs, used to assist in the legitimization or delegitimization of social practices.

The data presents several instances of multimodality that can be related to the legitimization of that which is being narrated. First, because such texts are typed, they allow for a choice in the use of emphatic devices such as italics, capitalization and overuse of punctuation.

Sample 5A is written entirely in italics. Capitalization abides in the warnings that can be written entirely in capital letters ‘*BE CAUTIOS WHEN GOING TO THE MOVIES!!!!*’ (5B) or calls attention to a specific word ‘*it is extremely important to ALWAYS carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas or foods*’ (7A). The overuse of exclamation marks also usually stresses a precautionary statement ‘*This is real!!*’ (1A). Such choices in typing are in a sense inflammatory and serves to elicit an emotional response from the reader.

Sample 3A presents an image that is supposed to represent a larvae infestation in a female breast. It is an analytical process (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996) where the part (the breast) represents the whole (the woman) and assigns possessive Attributes to it (the larvae), allowing the viewer to scrutinize the Attributes. Besides, the very close-

up shot and straight frontal angle engage the reader and neutralize perspective, allowing only one point of view, in this case, one that agrees with the report in written mode.

This image has been examined by collectors²⁸ whose interest lay in checking on the veracity of ULs who found it to be fabricated. It is actually a mixture of two different images, one of a breast, combined with that of a lotus seedpod. (Figure 5.1)

Figure 5.1 Fabricated Breast Infestation Image Based on Images of a Lotus Seedpod.



Another example of multimodal legitimation is in sample 8A. The UL accuses Barack Obama of being member of a church that ‘*has a non-negotiable commitment to Africa*’, and that supposedly only accepts black people as members, declaring itself ‘*unashamedly*’ black. It then offers a link to the website of the Trinity Church of Christ. The website, as well as the church, do exist. In the website, it is stated that “We are a congregation which is Unashamedly Black and Unapologetically

²⁸ <http://www.snopes.com/photos/medical/breastrash.asp>

<http://www.hoax-slayer.com/breast-larvae.html>

<http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/i/infestedbreast.htm#.UfLd2MoSZDk>

Christian”²⁹, and explained that “we are called to be agents of liberation not only for the oppressed, but for all of God’s family” (in which they include people of all races). The church seems to focus on offering cultural, educational and employment opportunities for African Americans who have historically been racially segregated. The conclusion that Obama is an ‘*unabashedly RACIST*’ (8A) because he is related to the church is a little too far-fetched though. First, we cannot be sure that he is a member of the congregation. Second, the information reported on the UL about the church seems to be greatly taken out of context and generalized.

What both the image and the website show is that multimodality is used to legitimize the information in the ULs. Truthful or not, these non-linguistic elements seem to corroborate the plots they are related to and add to the credibility of the stories.

5.5 FINAL REMARKS

This chapter has discussed the way in which social actors, social action and legitimation are represented in ULs. We have seen that the victims are portrayed as powerless over the narrated events and they can be either personalized, which adds to the credibility of the plot, or genericized, so that the reader can relate to them. Deceivers, on the other hand, are mostly indeterminate, creating the overall feeling that they could be anyone. Besides, they are granted the power of performing material transactional actions over the defenseless victims.

Possible victims are collectivized and the reader is included in this group, which brings the threat closer to the one who receives the e-mail. Readers and senders, however, are only allowed the power to spread the information.

The warnings are legitimized by the inclusion of the voice of more knowledgeable people, where these legitimizers are either referred to by name or function, granting them authority. Besides, the frequent exclusion of the sources of the information, the evaluations offered by the sender and the addition of multimodal elements all have the role of bringing a status of truth to these stories.

The discussion also revealed motifs which underlie the represented social practices. Overall, these ULs play with elements that seem to invoke the fears of the reader, such as vulnerability,

²⁹http://www.trinitychicago.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=27

contamination, incapacitation, large corporations, death, and the co-existence of strangers. These motifs will be further discussed and placed in the context of Liquid Modernity in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL PRACTICE IN LIQUID MODERNITY: THE CASE OF URBAN LEGENDS

6.1 URBAN LEGENDS AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

The language of the Internet is nowadays one of the most pervasive languages that people from globalized societies are exposed to. The advent of virtual communication modes and channels has allowed information to flow without the need for a human carrier, that is, information sharing among different communities is no longer dependent on a human body that would cross borders and deliver messages, oral or written, to people in different locations. Emails, chats, tweets, threads, blogs, forums and many other new channels of the Internet have become a great source of information and entertainment for a large amount of people all over the world. Through the Web, people can offer and share information that they consider to be valid, escaping mediation by the traditional Media. Furthermore, bits and pieces of popular knowledge can be combined, confronted, dropped or added in virtual texts according to the beliefs or intents of their readers and re-producers. In sum, the new channels of the Internet have social, political and educational roles, since they allow people to make connections between the bits and pieces of information they receive through different media and consequently to try to understand how the information they face relate to or challenge their own beliefs.

Within a variety of genres which are transmitted through virtual channels, Urban Legends sent by e-mail call attention due to their clear folkloristic aspect, insomuch as they are materializations of tradition by custom and practice. Therefore, just like games, crafts, costumes, ballads, proverbs and traditional legends, contemporary ULs are cultural constructs that encode values and beliefs, and as such, they can be seen as an entry point into the communities where they circulate.

The knowledge or 'lore' spread through the Internet assumes an important role in contemporary globalized societies, since it allows people both to be disseminators and receivers of knowledge, an authoritative resource (Giddens, 1979; 1984) once reserved only to traditional print and oral media. When knowingly or unknowingly sharing an Urban Legend, its disseminator believes s/he possesses an important piece of information that is unavailable to the receiver. Hence, s/he exerts power over the social structure by warning possible victims

of the risks they are exposed to and by (expectedly) preventing the vicious reports from happening again, in a way that their discursive action could then defy the current structure.

On the other hand, it is known that ULs deal with the fears of the communities where they circulate, (Harding, 2005; Brunvand, 1981, 1993, 2002; Berenbaum, 2001), which, as we have seen, is mostly the fear of violence or contamination which can lead to the loss of allocative resources, either material goods or their physical integrity. As a consequence, the (re-)transmission of the information leads to the reinforcement of those same fears.

The represented social actors, or the 'characters' of the narrative, are also assigned certain authoritative resources (or lack thereof). The victims lack the knowledge of the possible scam or deceit, since one can infer that, in case s/he knew about its possibility, s/he would have avoided it. At the same time, after falling victim and consequently acquiring the resource, they can assume the position of a more knowledgeable person and warn others, becoming legitimizers of the narrated plot along with the expert voices presented in the texts (who were previously discussed in section 5.4.1).

Anyhow, whenever an individual reads an UL and gets to know about the threat it describes, s/he assumes the role of a more knowledgeable person. In sharing such information with her/his peers, s/he is unknowingly reinforcing the attitudes, fears and beliefs contained in such legend, such as the fear of contamination, incapacitation, strangers, processes of production unknown to us that are in the hands of large, impersonal corporations or even death.

Urban Legends are able to explore such aspects of life because our empirical knowledge of reality is partial, and for most people, it does not include information on the potential reality behind these stories. Social actors do not fully understand all the facets of every social practice they engage in. We do not know exactly how the processes of production and distribution of the products we buy take place; how an organ transplant can be viable; not even exactly how the government machine works. Consequently, stories of contamination, organ theft, or conspiracy theories could, after all, be truth.

However close to reality these stories are, or are not, the author/disseminator of an UL is acting in a social practice where s/he has available a couple of resources s/he is willing to share because of his/her own assigned importance which is based on his/her own personal beliefs.

Language plays an important role in this transmission of folklore because it can be constitutive or ancillary for cultural representations, but also because of the dynamic relationship between language use and social structures. While language is itself constrained by the social structure, language use also reinforces or challenges it. In the words of Halliday (1978, p. 23) “Culture shapes our behavior patterns and a great deal of our behavior is mediated through language.” In the next sections, I will discuss the way in which ULs explore generic structure and rhetorical mode in order to create meanings and relate such texts to the broader context of culture of Liquid Modernity.

6.2 URBAN LEGENDS AS GENRE

Textual genres can be understood as semiotic activities, that is, as processes of meaning production and comprehension. Following Van Leeuwen’s perspective (2005), three aspects characterize a genre: content, form and function.

The content of ULs, as discussed in Chapter Three, can be quite varied. However, in the legends under study here, fear is the motivator behind all the topics. These are stories of violent assaults, bodily contamination, kidnappings, death, and of the individual’s lack of control over and submission to larger social structures such as the government. Consequently, all such narratives present a victim and a deceiver. Because ULs are spread under a status of truth, they also present legitimizing elements, expert people or witnesses who could (supposing they were real) vouch for the veracity of the narrated events. The circumstances are easily recognizable by the readers, such as a service station, a parking lot, a bar, a movie theater or a department store. Hence, they are ‘urban’ in the sense that the story could have happened in any urbanized area that offers such elements to its inhabitants.

Besides, the narratives are told either in the present or in the recent past, indicating its contemporariness; and in first or second person, suggesting either the sender is him/herself a witness or that the victim is ‘a friend of a friend’. All such characteristics emphasize the aspect of fear, since they bring the threat closer to the reader.

Other common strategies found that nurture fear, but that do not seem to be an obligatory element to ULs, since they were not present in all the texts under study, are the collectivization of possible victims, the genericization or indetermination of deceivers, the warning of danger and instructions on prevention. The collectivization of possible victims

leads to the idea that the reader is part of that group. Whether indetermined or genericized, deceivers could be anyone. The warnings of danger, frequently repeated throughout the texts, and sometimes using capital letters or excessive exclamation marks, along with clear-cut instructions on how to avoid falling victim, may bring up a sense of urgency, which is an important element in the survival of ULs through time.

Thus, it is noticeable that the content and form of ULs are closely related to their function in the communities where they circulate. As previously explained, I look at their function from the lenses of Folklore studies, which understand that ULs function as a collective answer to the fears, anxieties and beliefs of specific social groups (Harding, 2005; Brunvand, 1981, 1993, 2002; Berenbaum, 2001). These stories then question the social structures of the communities where they are created and/or spread, at the same time that they reinforce the feelings of insecurity and challenge the established social order.

ULs can, hence, be defined as an activity of production and interpretation of meanings, recognized by their function as warnings of danger and by their exhortatory narrative rhetorical organization. Besides, such texts construe and reconstrue a representation of the social world as an insecure and fearful place.

6.2.1 URBAN LEGENDS IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER INTERNET GENRES

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the term ‘Urban Legends’ has been frequently used by the general public and traditional media to refer to all kinds of misinformation. One reason for this may be the fact that the advent of communication platforms on the Internet has allowed new genres to surface which can be quite similar to ULs in their intent.

One of such genres is Bogus Warnings, which warn their readers about potential threats, dangers, conspiracies or little known opportunities, usually in a sensational, alarmist way (Brunvand, 2001). They frequently report on computer viruses, but can also assume the form of supposed police warnings about current crimes or scams, or the suggestion that readers take part in a petition or boycott companies and products. Bogus warnings can, however, be clearly differentiated from ULs in terms of their format: they are presented as information statements, lacking the narrative element which is a crucial element in all types of legends.

Rumors, similarly to bogus warnings, also take the form of information statements, but can be differentiated from the latter through its context. Rumors arise in undefined situational contexts (Difonzo and Bordia, 2007), where a potentially threatening real event takes place and the individuals involved do not know the consequences of such event. Consequently, they are short lived (lasting as long as the indefiniteness remains), and are only spread by and to actors with a direct interest in the future result of the undefined condition. Brunvand (2001) points out they arise in periods of crisis, such as wars, epidemics and natural disasters.

These definitions are not clear-cut, though. Overlappings may occur and these small pieces of information statements can be developed into narratives, becoming themselves ULs. The epidemics of the ‘Bird flu’, for example, gave rise to a series of information statements which were transmitted by email, word of mouth and social media concerning the use of aniseed as a cure or a preventative for the disease. Locally, in specific countries affected by the disease, such statements could be considered rumors; as the pandemic aspect grew, similar pieces of information were transmitted internationally through the Internet, possibly to communities not under the threat of the disease, and could hence in these contexts also be considered bogus warnings.

The curative value of aniseed also gave rise to a series of stories, including Sample 8B in the present study. The narrative variant under analysis here also has aspects of conspiracy theories, that is, the underlying belief that a specific group of people secretly intends to subvert the social or political order for personal profit (Brunvand, 2001). Conspiracy theories are not a genre on their own, though. They are a system of belief that relies on different genres – Bogus Warnings, Rumors and Urban Legends, for example – for its dissemination.

6.3 URBAN LEGENDS AND RHETORICAL MODE

Under the previously discussed rhetorical modes (Longacre, 1983), ULs can be clearly placed under the narrative type of prose discourse, since they are story telling with the goal of informing and, maybe to a lesser degree, entertaining. However, as Longacre (1983) and Meurer (1998) remind us, a given purpose may be realized by a text which appears to belong to a different category. I wish to argue then, that ULs, even though relying on the narrative structure (that will be further discussed in the next section), also carry procedural and behavioral- hortatory intents.

First, urban legends can be procedural in that most of them offer a type of ‘how-to-do-it’. They inform the reader on how to avoid falling victim of the reported threat, giving instructions such as ‘*BE extra careful going to and from your car at night*’ (1A), ‘*Before you use a public toilet, lift the seat to check for spiders*’ (2A), ‘*keep an eye out for your kids when going to these shopping places*’ (6A), ‘*carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas or foods*’ (7A) and so on. In a sense then, the narrative in itself may be functioning both as context and as illustration (see Meurer, 1998) for the procedural material, thus granting it concreteness and authority by inserting it in the narrative form (Longacre, 1983).

Second, urban legends may also include behavioral discourse of the hortatory variety. In several instances, ULs rely heavily on linkage through cause, effect and purpose. The plot is again functioning as context and illustration, justifying somehow the urge for a change of conduct in the reader. This change may include a) avoiding risks (following the procedural ‘how-tos’) and b) assuming the position of sender of the message. In both cases, devices of hortatory discourse are employed. One of such devices is the softening of the second person reference by the use of a first person plural inclusive as in ‘*we do not know what parasite is in our clothes when we buy them*’ (3A), ‘*so we end up paying for the medicine*’ (8B), ‘*most of us just plop down into the seats*’ (5B). A further and more frequent hortatory device is to use a third person to indicate a model of good or questionable behavior. In a sense then, most narratives must contain some level of hortatory intent, since the effect of the actions of the represented participants lead to some type of moral evaluation on the actions themselves. Longacre (1983) suggests that hortatory discourse may be a cultural universal and that “The very idea of social control seems to imply this” (p.13).

In ULs, then, procedural and behavioral discourses may be given as narratives since the apparently entertaining story may be an attempt to explain things that are mostly difficult to be dealt with, agreeing with findings from Folklore studies that have long seen legends as a shared experience that helps individuals make sense of events in the world (Harding, 2005; DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Brunvand, 1981).

6.3.1 URBAN LEGENDS AS NARRATIVES

The narrative structure is part of the definition of Urban Legends, and as previously seen in section 6.2.1, an important tool for its differentiation from Internet genres with similar intent. Each of the texts

under analysis in this study was hence structurally described following Labov's (1972) six main narrative sections. The following Table (6.1) exemplifies this in the first five texts (the complete table can be seen in Appendix III).

Table 6.1 Narrative Sections in Urban Legends

Narrative Sections	1A	1B	2A	2B	3A
Abstract	Ladies, beware at the gas station [Subj]	Grandma larceny [Subj]	Spiders under toilet seat [Subj]	This is a true story which happened on 9-11-01 [Subj]	Wash before wearing [Subj]
Orientation	A friend stopped at a pay-at-the-pump gas station to get gas	Family driving through remote part of the country	3 women in Chicago turned up at hospitals with the same symptoms.	James worked on the World Trade Center, he is blind and has a Golden retriever named Daisy	Woman came back from south America
Complicating action	a guy slipped into the back seat of her car	Grandma dies	Same happens with a person from Los Angeles	Plane hits building	She notices a rash on her left breast
Evaluation	He could have kidnaped, killed and dismembered her	Family ties grandma's body to luggage rack on top of vehicle	Investigation of restaurants and airplanes victims had been on	Daisy leads people out of the building through the smoke	A series of doctors cannot diagnose her, and bandage her sores
Result	Near-disaster	All family members leave vehicle at service station	Contamination by venomous spiders hiding under toilet seat	Daisy saved 967 lives	A dermatologist removes the bandages and they find larva growing in her breast
Coda	Be carefull Pass this on	Car – and grandma's corpse get stolen	It can save your life Pass this on	Daisy is rewarded a medal of honor	Larvae were feeding off the fat, tissue and milk cannals of her bossom.

The narrative structure in e-mail format ULs reveals two important aspects of these texts. First, in all samples from the data, the abstract is constrained to the subject of the e-mail. Differently from oral communication, e-mail writers have a very specific space where to call the readers' attention, and such space does not allow for long descriptions of what is to come. The subject of the e-mail will define whether the reader is or is not interested in following up with the

reading of the text, and carry the weight of inciting the receiver to do so. The subjects of seven out of the twenty texts clearly indicate that the message contains some type of warning as in ‘*Ladies, beware at the gas station*’ (1A), ‘*Neighbors beware!*’ (3B), ‘*Remain Alert at All Times*’ (6A) and ‘*BE AWARE! READ THIS GIRLS!*’ (6B). Most of the remaining subjects offer a very short abstract of the subject, as ‘*Grandma larceny*’ (1B), ‘*Spiders under toilet seat*’ (2A), or ‘*This is a true story which happened on 9-11-01*’ (2B). The fact that most abstracts do not make it clear that the story contains either a warning or a hortatory intent indicates that the legends are, at first, offered as simply entertaining. Longacre (1983) has noticed that, “Because people do not like to be urged to change their conduct” presenting material as drama “may make it easier for them to accept it” (p. 15).

The second important aspect of narrative structure in ULs lies in their coda. Over half (eleven) of the texts signal the end of the narrative by explicit reference to how the reader must behave now that s/he has knowledge of the information narrated. The reader must take measures not to fall victim, spread the message or, in text 4A, pray for the victims. In a sense then, this narrative structure can be related to tenor, if we consider that the coda indicates the turn-taking of the sender has ended and now is time for the reader to assume his turn.

Besides, narratives are known for working as a community-building device (Meurer, 1998), though in Liquid Modernity they might be better thought of as a network-building device, since in contemporary times the concept of ‘community’ has been more related to something that precedes the individual, while ‘network’ refers to groups one chooses to get involved with on the basis of a shared temporary interest (Bauman, 2001).

ULs, as narratives, have the potential to “encapsulate human difficulties and solutions as difficulties possibly similar to the ones the readers are facing, or want to help other people with” (Meurer, 1998, p. 40). Readers are faced with events they can identify with, and such events on their turn relate to other individuals within similar social conditions. Hence, when readers accept the representation of themselves as possible victims, they aggregate to the network of victims, as opposed to the network of possible deceivers. Consequently, they are encouraged to use the past events of their peers as a basis for further action, and more than that, to imitate such agents in spreading the information as an attempt to lead the entire network of possible victims to a safer way of conducting their daily activities.

6.4 URBAN LEGENDS IN THE CONTEXT OF LIQUID MODERNITY

Fear has now settled inside, saturating our daily routines; it hardly needs further stimuli from outside, since the actions it prompts day in, Day out supply all the motivation and all the energy it needs to reproduce itself. (Bauman, 2007, p. 9)

So far we have seen that Urban legends instantiate the context of Liquid Modernity both by representing insecurity and by offering individuals a chance to become part of a group, that of possible victims.

Human action in liquid modernity can be described as paradoxical. Led by uncertainty, given the dissolution of local political power, individuals must frequently review priorities, change paths and re-organize long standing beliefs. At the same time, people want to hold on to known structures that did, in a 'solid' modernity, create an (arguably faux) feeling of security, such as the community (which, as we have previously seen in Chapter 2, can be contemporarily better understood as networks).

These dissolutions of the community and of the political controlling power takes responsibilities that were once communal and places it on the hands of the individual, who needs to less conform to pre-established rules, on the other hand being more flexible to abandon commitments and pursue new and individually more desirable opportunities.

All these characteristics lead to a type of self-propelling fear. Since the object of an individual's fear is not clear anymore, people tend to look for protection in all fronts. Fencing your windows, carrying a gun or spreading bogus warnings (such as those frequently presented in ULs) however only reproduces the feeling of chaos and insecurity they were meant to prevent.

According to Bauman (2007, p. 9), "Fears prompt us to take defensive action. When it is taken, defensive action gives immediacy and tangibility to fear." Spreading ULs, then, at the same time represents an individual's attempt to take control over their own safety, and propels the sense of insecurity further. Nonetheless, trying to discredit such stories will only lead to the same effect. Noymer (2001), having studied the transmission of ULs through the application of epidemic models, refers to this as 'autocatalysis', a counterintuitive event where skeptics who actively try to suppress these legends fuel the transmission by those who are not willing to give up their belief.

Besides, in an ever-changing world where the future is uncertain, the threats one might face are unpredictable. Individuals, faced with constant uncertainty, focus consequently on the threats they believe they can avoid, that is, personal risks.

In other words, we seek *substitute* targets on which to unload the surplus existential fear that has been barred from its natural outlets, and we find such makeshift targets in taking elaborate precautions against inhaling someone else's cigarette smoke, ingesting fatty food or 'bad' bacteria (while avidly swilling the liquids which promise to contain the 'good' ones), exposure to sun, or unprotected sex. (Bauman 2007, p. 11)

Most of the elements presented in the warnings spread by ULs can be considered 'makeshift targets', since these legends involve mostly risks to individual health that can (expectedly) be avoided by personal action. Contamination, which as we have seen in chapter 5 is a common theme in ULs, is expressed in these texts as something that can be brought about by a series of avoidable actions, that vary from ingesting food from unhygienic cans or wearing unwashed underwear, to sitting on a movie theater seat without checking it first or having sex with a stranger.

These makeshift targets appear because, since people believe that the integrity of the state is at risk, individuals are left to seek for solitary solutions, using whatever tools and resources they have at hand.

The spectre of social degradation against which the *social* state swore to insure its citizens is being replaced in the political formula of the 'personal safety state' by threats of a paedophile on the loose, of a serial killer, an obtrusive beggar, a mugger, stalker, poisoner, terrorist, or better still by all such threats rolled into one in the figure of an illegal immigrant, against whom the modern state in its most recent avatar promises to defend its subjects." (Bauman, 2007, p. 15)

Such individuals, however, cannot be recognized in the crowd. The 'us' (people who are supposedly 'good' and unprotected) versus 'them' (people who should be object of our fears) dichotomy is represented in ULs as possible victims versus deceivers. In order for 'us' (possible victims) to preserve our personal safety from 'them' (deceivers), without trusting the system, it is better to believe the

warnings contained in ULs and let our peers in the ‘us’ group know about such threats too.

All in all, the new focus on crime and on dangers threatening the bodily safety of individuals and their property has been shown beyond reasonable doubt to be intimately related to ‘the mood of precariousness’, and to follow closely the pace of economic deregulation and of the related substitution of individual self-responsibility for social solidarity. (Bauman, 2007, p. 17)

However, solidarity, in an individualized world where human bonds are looser than ever, becomes a concept that is not easy to understand or apply. Suddenly, it seems to extend only to those closer and dear to us at that given time, born out of the sense of individual and collective impotence over events around us.

All in all, when people share ULs they construe a virtual barrier between ‘us’ and ‘them’, they identify to a group that is, at that given time, their network, those who, because they can also be victims and share the same fears, become their peers. At the same time, as previously discussed, sharing our fears make them even more concrete, which propels the sense of insecurity (including the insecurity of these same human bonds) further.

Some of the ULs in the data can be seen as representing specific aspects of Liquid Modernity. Legends 10A and 10B, both academic legends, tackle the general distrust in the stability of traditional institutions such as the school and college. In 10A, the school is portrayed as unsafe, and the adults who were supposed to care for the bodily safety of students are not only unable to do so, but are also easily fooled by students who manage to hide the truth behind the death of the victim. In 10B, it is the evaluative system of college that is in check since the professor deals with so many students he is unable to know each one of them personally. Legend 8A, on the other hand, questions the authority of the Church, suggesting that different churches might have political interests that do not benefit all, but only a specific group of people (in this case, black people). This indicates that traditional social forms, once meant to guard repetitions of routines and patterns of acceptable behavior (Bauman, 2007), have lost the capacity to perpetuate established characteristics through time, and hence “cannot serve as frames of reference for human actions and long-term life strategies” (Bauman, 2007, p.1).

Another important aspect of liquid modernity is the separation between power and politics. While politics and policies remain local, power has become globalized. The information society and the international openness to the exchange of capital and goods leads to a global concern with the ‘others’, since any event in the world has the potential both to be known and to have economic influence all over the globe. This intellectual and material openness has dismantled boundaries, and

it now brings to most minds the terrifying experience of a heteronomous, hapless and vulnerable population confronted with, and possibly overwhelmed by forces it neither controls nor fully understands; a population horrified by its own undefendability and obsessed with the tightness of its frontiers and the security of the individuals living inside them (Bauman, 2007, p. 7)

Hence, legends about governments and conspiracy theories abide. The presidency candidate may have a hidden agenda and aim at the good of a specific minority group of people (text 8A), and important government representatives may even create an international pandemic in the interest of their own personal profit (text 8B).

Besides, the ‘other’ in ULs can be explicitly represented as a foreign element. In legend 2B, the spider responsible for the deaths of victims originated in South America, and the larvae responsible for the infestation in legend 3A also do so. Text 3A, however, also states that ‘*it has been reported that this is happening in Zimbabwe as well*’, so, in the data, such foreign elements come from (assumedly) underdeveloped parts of the world.

In a globalized world, we share the physical space we live in with strangers, people who are present but unfamiliar to us. Since these ‘others’ cannot be controlled or clearly categorized in our (very relative) established order, this person is the potential thief, assailant, criminal - outside the social limits but inside the geographical borders, which makes their threat constant.

The deceiver in ULs is this stranger. It is the individual who shares our environment and knows our social practices (texts 1A, 1B, 3B, 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B). It is responsible for the large, impersonal and greedy corporations, (texts 7A, 7B, 8B). It is the terrorist who brought down the World Trade Center (text 2B).

In the data, the identification of the reader with the position of victim (granted through the semantic genericization of such elements) raises the feeling of insecurity, while the recognition of the deceiver as an anonymous or impersonal ‘other’ who is placed in mundane environments lead the threat to seem real. As such, the appeal of ULs is closely related to the current human condition – that of constant insecurity and fear. Even if the described threat is not real, and the reader is not represented as the actual victim, the possibility in itself is overwhelming. Fear blinds the readers from considering the source or veracity of narrated facts, and given their ignorance of what is/is not, can/cannot be done, most are left to take the only action available: re-sending the message to their peers.

In this context, ULs arise as a discursive way for individuals to share their fears and beliefs, and become a mean through which one can deal with the condition of constant uncertainty we live in. Hence, when sharing ULs (and our fears), we associate to a community of temporary sameness, a network of people who maintain their various individual identities, but who identify with each other through the same overall feeling of insecurity.

6.5 FINAL REMARKS

The sharing of Contemporary Urban legends can be regarded as a social practice in a global village that shares the same fears and insecurity, with each individual or group of individuals changing details in order to make the story part of their own world view. Lexicogrammar, semantics and text structure work together as to represent insecurity (which is the main concern of individuals in Liquid Modernity), and at the same time reinforce such overall feeling of unsafety.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Urban Legends are a social practice that simultaneously represent and propagate the fears and insecurities that are characteristic of liquid modernity. Through the sharing of such texts, people identify with a group of ‘us’ (possible victims) and oppose themselves from the group of ‘them’ (deceivers).

Considering that individuals, when engaging in social practices, can, through their action and their discourse materialized in texts, reinforce the existing structure or challenge it, creating, thus new rules and consequently, provoking the emergence of new social practices, it can be said that, when individuals engage in the social practice of disseminating Urban Legends, the texts they create, adapt or re-send can either reinforce or challenge an existing social structure where people suffer from intangible and widespread fears. However, for new practices and conventions to be developed, it is essential that consciousness is developed first (Fairclough, 1992). Because of that, it is important that we start to look at Urban Legends not as simple entertaining stories, but as texts that hide behind them a series of ideological investments.

In a time of liquid fears, where insecurities are diffuse and strangers share the same geographical space, ULs function as warning reports about the impending threats we are surrounded by. As Spivak (1994, p.188) puts it, “Reading is a position where I (or a group of ‘us’ whom I identify with) make this anonymous plot my own, finding in it a guarantee of my existence as myself and as one of us.” Hence, through the fears represented in ULs, we identify with all others who share the same fears, and in a globalized world, it does not matter how geographically far those others are.

Besides, while the transmission of such warnings may defy the existing social structure by preventing the repetition of the reported crimes, scams and deceits, the duality of discourse remains. Re-sending such texts ends up reinforcing the discursive structure of fear.

7.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

(1) From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, how can the textual characteristics found in ULs be related to the broader socio-cultural practices these Legends reinforce or challenge?

In ULs, all strata of meaning work together as to represent and reinforce the widespread feelings of fear and insecurity that are characteristic of the contemporary human situation of liquid modernity. The analysis has shown that the relationship between text and context is not arbitrary; on the contrary, lexicogrammatical choices and semantic meanings constitute, and are enabled by, their immediate context of situation. At the same time, such context of situation and textual configuration are enabled by the broader context of liquid modernity they come to reinforce.

(2) What characteristics of the TRANSITIVITY system predominate in these ULs? In other words, in the samples chosen for analysis, who are the participants represented in the samples, what kinds of processes are they involved in, in which circumstances, and what is their importance for the realization of discourse?

The configuration of TRANSITIVITY in Urban Legends leads to the representation of the narrated threats as widespread, surplus and inescapable. First, deceivers are granted power of AGENCY over the victims, as most of the processes they perform are in material transitive clauses of doing that unfold over the victims (*'[the deceiver] took the little girl, brought her into the bathroom, shaved half her head intending to shave it all, undressed her in less than 10 min'* 6A). Second, relational clauses tend to assign attributes to the deceivers that indicate that they are real (*'This is real!'* 1A, *'It is documented and confirmable.'* 3B), they are intrinsically dangerous (*'This spider's venom is extremely toxic.'* 2A, *'This ring is well organized, well funded, has very skilled personnel'* 3B, *'Which is toxic and obviously lethal!'* 7A) or their actions have undesirable consequences (*'This is so squirmish'* 3A, *'It is so grotesque'* 3A, *'This looks horrible'* 3A). Besides, relational processes identify the deceiver either by name (*'It was determined to be the South American Blush Spider (arachnius gluteus)'* 2A, *'The drug is called 'BURUNDANGA''* 6B, *'It was the Tampax Pearl Fibers'* 7B), so that they can be recognized by the readers, or generalize it (*'Whoever this person was'* 6A, *'even the most modern, upper-class, super store has rats and mice'* 7A), so that it could be anyone. Circumstances of place add to the feeling that the reported threats are widespread, since the narrated events take place in mundane, everyday environments which are supposedly well known to the readers.

Victims and possible victims are granted little chance of escaping such threats. Overall, the victim (whenever s/he survives) only has the possibility to inform other people of the threat, and to express their feelings of discomfort and pain, hence spreading the message to the

readers through assuming the position of Sayer in verbal clauses. Senders and readers, in the position of possible victims, are likewise given the power of inform other people. Besides, they can also act in material processes in order to avoid falling victim of the reported scam, deceit or crime, but only after they have been informed of the threat and given instructions on how they might escape it. Having received the information, readers are then given the attribute of cautiousness needed to escape being subdued by deceivers.

Since the threats are presented as widespread and mostly inescapable, the reader can easily identify with the victim, both by believing s/he could be in the same place or situation and by feeling sensitive to the suffering of the other.

(3) How is the interpersonal relationship between interactants established by the producer/reproducer of each UL?

Even though narrated events in ULs tend to be fabulous, the information spread by E-mail format ULs is given under a status of truth and in a friendly tone, so consequently its veracity should not be argued upon.

This status of truth is presented through an overall lack of modalization, but also in the frequent use of the modal operator *will* to indicate the tragic and inescapable consequences of not resending the email. At the same time, *could* and *would* are used mostly to indicate the possibility of one falling victim. Besides, legitimizers bring a sense of credibility to the story, where they fulfill their function as experts who can aid the victim or investigate the reported events. Moreover, these participants are able to explain what has happened from an expert position and report to the media and the public as trusted witnesses.

The friendly tone is established in the use of rhetorical questions meant to engage the reader in a less formal relationship by creating a false sense of dialogism. Besides, the reader is the receiver of commands to either continue the spread of the information or taking measures not to fall victim. Most commands, however, are modalized through the use of *please*, so that the readers can accept such commands as suggestions on how to behave for one's own good.

The senders also frequently refer to themselves and readers as *we*, a group of people who are all possible victims and who can hence identify to each other through their subject position in relation to the narrated events.

(4) Who are the social actors represented in the text and what sort of agency is awarded to them?

ULs exclude certain participants through nominalizations, where the participant itself is substituted for its institutional affiliation, granting a greater legitimizing power over the narrated events, since nominalizations are seemingly scientific-like resources, as in *'the report is that'* (1A), *'autopsy results showed'* (2A) and *'a subsequent investigation revealed'*. Besides, such narratives include specific legitimizing social actors, granted authority given their expert position as doctors or police workers.

Victims are most frequently genericized or treated as a group, so that readers can easily identify to the individual victim or consider him/herself to be part of such group. In most of the texts, the victim is clearly a female, so women are represented as more vulnerable members of society. Men are not excluded, though. They are granted the power to inform the women in their lives (sisters, wives, girlfriends and cousins are a few mentioned) about the potential risks they are facing. Possible victims are collectivized as a group of 'we' - senders and readers and their friends who need to be warned – as opposed to the group of 'them' deceivers.

Deceivers are usually genericised or indeterminate. Their anonymity takes the focus from who they are and places it on what they do. They constitute a group of 'others', people who share the same geographic space as victims, but who are capable of conducting scams, deceptions and crimes.

(5) What kinds of social action are present in these texts and in what ways are they represented?

In ULs, while victims are involved mostly in emotive reactions, the deceivers act in material actions. Victims' reactions are represented in their participation as Sensers in mental clauses, where they mostly express their feelings and are thus granted little power over the narrated events, which stresses their inability to escape falling victim of the threats. Deceivers, on the other hand, act in transactional material social actions (represented in material clauses of 'doing') that extend over the victims as they commit crimes, deceive or scam. In other words, while deceivers act upon the victims, the victims only react to such actions.

Readers, senders and possible victims, in order to avoid falling victim, are granted power over certain material actions such as *'lift the seat to check for spiders'* (2A), *'wash all bras, underwear'* (3A) and *'carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas or drinks'* (7A). Such actions, however, only extend over objects so that they can avoid falling victim of the threat, but the only real power they have over other human beings is verbal: that of transmitting the warning.

(6) Which legitimation strategies can be found in these texts? Who is vested with authority, and how is this authority asserted?

Legitimations in ULs have two main purposes. First, they legitimize the narratives themselves, aiding in the construal of such representations as factual, and second, they legitimize certain social actions while delegitimizing others.

In order to assert the veracity of the narrated events, these texts include the voices of more expert members of society (doctors, police people, institutional representatives and people who, given the circumstances, may be considered knowledgeable of the facts) who vouch for the truth of the reports, adding to their credibility. For the same reason, multimodal elements such as external reference to a website or the use of images can be present.

Social actions conducted by the victims are usually legitimated. Mostly, these actors are simply acting in conformity to the social rules when they fall victim, so that they are not engaging in any specific actions that might put people in danger. Consequently, there are no specific reasons why these people were vulnerable, and moreover, it indicates that anyone acting in conformity with the common standards can also be in a susceptible position, which adds to the feeling that the threats are inescapable.

On the other hand, behaving carefully and avoiding dangerous circumstances are legitimized activities when, through rationalizations and mythopoesis, they are presented as possibilities for possible victims to avoid falling victim. Believing and resending the information are also legitimized actions. First, it is a matter of conformity, of simply acting as other people are doing. Second, a few rationalizations may be offered, as in indicating the tragic consequences of not doing so. Finally, through mythopoesis, such texts narrate in detail the suffering and possibly deadly experiences of people who have previously ignored the warnings.

Mythopoesis also works as to positively evaluate certain behaviors such as those related to gentleness, hygiene, sexual control, caring for other people (given they are part of the group of 'we' who may take victim positions) and transmitting information.

The deceivers' actions are always delegitimized. The deceiver or deceit is clearly negatively evaluated in lexical choices that describe them as 'sick', 'squimish', 'grotesque' or 'horrible'. Moral evaluations and mythopoesis work together as to indicate their actions are fearful, mostly intended and (possibly) life-threatening.

7.2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study presents an overall look at the construal of meaning in twenty Urban Legends, so results cannot be generalized as to concern all ULs in existence. Besides, data was collected from E-mail communication, and during the development of the research, there seems to have been a considerable decline of legends transmitted through this channel and an increase of legends in social networks. Moreover, this study has not tackled the matter of change in ULs from the oral format to the written one. It could be noticed, however, that the categories used in this study, primarily set by Brunvand (1993) based on oral legends, might be reconsidered for written contemporary ULs. The automobile, in a globalized world where distance has considerably lost its importance due to instant communication, might have assumed a less important cultural significance; in the collected legends, the car very rarely appears as a main theme, and even as an auxiliary element it is uncommon. On the other hand, new categories might have come up with the advent of the Internet, such as ULs about technology or computer viruses and malware.

Consequently, it would be interesting for further research to be developed a) examining more specific aspects of the construal of meaning in a larger set of data; b) considering how ULs and their cultural significance have changed from the traditional oral format to the written contemporary format ones; and, c) mapping and categorizing ULs on the Internet considering its various possible platforms of dissemination.

Finally, when considering the pervasiveness of information sharing on the Internet in today's society, especially in terms of the new challenges that globalization has brought upon education, there is a clear need for teaching and learning practices that account for the new resources one may find on the Internet, including its new and adapted genres, so that students may become increasingly more apt to function effectively in a liquid-modern-global context. Furthermore, following CDA's belief whereby awareness is essential for the development of critical reading (Caldas-Coulthard, 1997), this study expands the subsidies for the awareness of teachers, students and social actors in general about the dialectical relationship between language and social structure and their implications in contemporary society.

7.3 SURVIVAL OF URBAN LEGENDS

According to Brunvand (1981), any legend, in order to survive, must possess three characteristics: a strong story appeal, a foundation in actual belief and a meaningful message or moral. The appeal of ULs lies in their scary or surprising plot lines. Heinous plots have always been used in folk narrative traditions to reinforce the moral being transmitted. Oedipus plucks out his own eyes when he realizes he has married his mother and killed his father. Goddess Athena is brought to the world from her father's head by the hands of her brother, who uses his metal-working tools to open their father's skull apart.

The foundation on actual belief is guaranteed by the legitimizing use of expert authority and circumstances and events which the readers can relate to. Furthermore, the messages being transmitted are all related to elements such as vulnerability, contamination, incapacitation, large corporations, death, and the co-existence of strangers, motifs that are closely related to the widespread and inescapable fears that underlie life in liquid modernity.

Another important characteristic of ULs to this discussion is their adaptability. Due to increased mobility in contemporary society, and international communication networks, one UL can be easily transferrable across geographical borders needing only a change in setting or the addition of local motifs to be picked up by its new group of believers and transmitters.

It seems ULs will survive for as long as people continue to use narratives as a way to deal with their fears and insecurities, and for as long as our fears and insecurities remain.

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APPENDIX I

DATA: URBAN LEGENDS IN THEIR ORIGINAL FORMAT

- 1 Legends about Automobiles
 - 1A: Fwd: Ladies, beware at the gas station!
 - 1B: Fwd: Grand(ma) Larceny
- 2 Legends about Animals
 - 2A: Spiders under toilet seat
 - 2B: This is a true story which happened on 9-11-01
- 3 Horror Legends
 - 3A: Fwd: Wash before Wearing!
 - 3B: FWD: Neighbors, beware!
- 4 Accident Legends
 - 4A: Subject: urgent prayer request
 - 4B: Boiled brains
- 5 Sex and Scandal Legends
 - 5A: The necrophiliac's gift
 - 5B: Fwd: Please check your chair when going to the movie theaters!!!!
- 6 Crime Legends
 - 6A: Subject: Remain Alert at All Times
 - 6B: Subject: BE AWARE! READ THIS GIRLS!
- 7 Business and Professional Legends
 - 7A: storeroom danger
 - 7B: Fwd: Ladies, caution with use of tampons
- 8 Legends about Governments
 - 8A: Fwd: The truth about OBAMA
 - 8B: Subject: BIRD FLU - US PROPAGANDA!
- 9 Celebrity Legends
 - 9A: Okay. . . I've HAD it. . . REALLY had it with Michelle Obama.
 - 9B: Fwd: News: Jon Bon Jovi's Death
- 10 Academic Legends
 - 10A: They pushed her down a sewer
 - 10B: Flunk me if you can

1 Legends about Automobiles

1A: Fwd: Ladies, beware at the gas station!

A friend stopped at a pay-at-the-pump gas station to get gas. Once she filled her gas tank after paying at the pump and started to leave the attendant inside came over the speaker. He told her that something happened with her card and that she needed to come inside to pay. The lady was confused because the transaction showed complete and approved. She told him that and was getting ready to leave but the attendant once again urged her to come in to pay or else. She proceeded to go inside and started arguing with the attendant about his threat. He told her to calm down and listen carefully:

He told her that while she was pumping gas, a guy slipped into the back seat of her car on the other side and he had called the police. She immediately became scared and looked out there in time to see her car door open and the guy slip out.

The report is that the new gang initiation thing is to bring back a woman's body part. One way they are doing this is crawling under girls/women's cars while they're pumping gas or at grocery stores in the night time. Then they are cutting the lady's ankles to disable them in order

to kidnap them, kill and dismember them. The other way is slipping into unattended cars and kidnapping the women to kill and dismember them.

Please pass this on to other women, young and old alike. BE extra careful going to and from your car at night. If at all possible, don't go alone! This is real!!

The message:

1. ALWAYS lock your car doors, even if you're gone for just second.
2. Check underneath your car when approaching it for reentry, and check in the back before getting in.
3. Always be aware of your surroundings and other individuals in your general vicinity, particularly at night!

Send this to your friends so as many females as possible can be made aware of this new threat, and so your friend will not be the next victim.

1B: Fwd: Grand(ma) Larceny

A friend of mine knows a family who were on vacation, driving through some remote part of the country in their station wagon. They had brought Grandma along even though she was quite elderly and not feeling well, because her heart was set on going on this one last trip with her grandchildren, and they didn't want to disappoint her.

Unfortunately, at some point during the long drive Grandma passed away in the back seat of the car. Her grandchildren, sitting on either side of her, became hysterical.

Since they were several hours away from the nearest sizable city, the father did the only thing he could think of to remedy the situation. He wrapped Grandma's corpse in a thick blanket, secured it to the luggage rack on top of the station wagon, and drove on.

When they finally reached the outskirts of civilization the father stopped at a service station and everyone clambered out of the car while he used a payphone to call authorities and report the death. Understandably nervous and upset, he didn't realize he had left the keys in the ignition.

When the family went back to the car they found it had been stolen, along with all their possessions... and Grandma.

2 Legends about Animals

2A: Spiders under toilet seat

If you haven't already heard about it in the news, here is what happened. 3 women in Chicago, turned up at hospitals over a 5 day period, all with the same symptoms. Fever, chills, and vomiting, followed by muscular collapse, paralysis, and finally, death. There were no outward signs of trauma. Autopsy results showed toxicity in the blood. These women did not know each other, and seemed to have nothing in common. It was discovered, however, that they had all visited the same restaurant (Big Chappies, at Blare Airport), within days of their deaths.

The health department descended on the restaurant, shutting it down. The food, water, and air conditioning were all inspected and tested, to no avail. The big break came when a waitress at the restaurant was rushed to the hospital with similar symptoms. She told doctors that she had been on vacation, and had only went to the restaurant to pick up her check. She did not eat or drink while she was there, but had used the restroom.

That is when one toxicologist, remembering an article he had read, drove out to the restaurant, went into the restroom, and lifted the toilet seat. Under the seat, out of normal view, was small spider. The spider was captured and brought back to the lab, where it was determined to be the South American Blush Spider (*arachnius gluteus*), so named because of its reddened flesh color. This spider's venom is extremely toxic, but can take several days to take effect. They live in cold, dark, damp, climates, and toilet rims provide just the right atmosphere.

Several days later a lawyer from Los Angeles showed up at a hospital emergency room. Before his death, he told the doctor, that he had been away on business, had taken a flight from New York, changing planes in Chicago, before returning home. He did not visit Big Chappies while there. He did, as did all of the other victims, have what was determined to be a puncture wound, on his right buttock.

Investigators discovered that the flight he was on had originated in South America. The Civilian Aeronautics Board (CAB) ordered an immediate inspection of the toilets of all flights from South America, and discovered the Blush spider's nests on 4 different planes! It is now believed that these spiders can be anywhere in the country. So please, before you use a public toilet, lift the seat to check for spiders.

It can save your life! And please pass this on to everyone you care about

2B: This is a true story which happened on 9-11-01

James Crane worked on the 101st of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center. He is blind so he has a golden retriever named Daisy. After the plane hit 20 stories below, James knew that he was doomed, so he let Daisy go out of and act of love. With tears in her eyes she darted away into the darkened hallway. Choking on the fumes of the jet fuel and the smoke he was just waiting to die. About 30 minutes later, Daisy comes back along with James' boss, who Daisy just happened to pick up on floor 112. On her first run of the building, she leads James, James' boss, and about 300 more people out of the doomed building. But she wasn't through yet, she knew there were others who were trapped. So, highly against James' wishes she ran back in the building. On her second run, she saved 392 lives. Again she went back in. During this run, the building collapses. James hears about this and falls on his knees into tears. Against all known odds, Daisy makes it out alive, but this time she is carried by a firefighter. "She lead us right to the people, before she got injured" the fireman explained. Her final run saved another 273 lives. She suffered acute smoke inhalation, severe burns on all four paws, and a broken leg, but she saved 967 lives. The next week, Mayor Guilaini rewards Daisy with the Canine medal of Honor of New York. Daisy is the first civilian Canine to win such an honor.

3 Horror Legends

3A: Fwd: Wash before Wearing!

It is horrible. Guys tell your wife, sisters, girlfriends, and girl cousins wash bra before wearing. ALL PLEASE WASH ALL BRAS, UNDERWEAR WHEN YOU BUY BEFORE WEARING THEM. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT PARASITE IS IN OUR CLOTHES WHEN WE BUY THEM. FORWARD TO EVERYBODY YOU KNOW. LET ME FORE WARN YOU THIS IS SO SQUIMISH, I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS CRAWLING ALL OVER ME EVEN AS

I SEND THIS TO YOU. BE AWARE. IT IS SO GROTESQUE. PLEASE WASH YOUR UNDERWEAR BEFORE WEARING. PREFERABLY IN BOILING HOT WATER.

This is not for the weak; I have never seen anything like this. Read the article first before looking at the picture. This looks horrible. Oh my God!!!!!!! Ladies this could happen to you and Guys this could happen to your wife, girlfriend, partner so please BEWARE, and also warn others.

It has been reported that this is happening in Zimbabwe as well, please make sure you iron your undergarments before you wear them and make sure that your clothes are ironed when they are dry and not damp. The picture is horrible but I felt that I should share with you. After anthropologist Susan McKinley came back home from an expedition in South America, she noticed a very strange rash on her left breast. Nobody knew what it was and she quickly dismissed it believing that the holes would leave in time. Upon her return she decided to see a doctor after she started developing intense pains. The doctor, not knowing the exact severity of the disease, gave her antibiotics and special creams. As time lapsed the pain did not subside and her left breast became more inflamed and started to bleed.

She decided to bandage her sores however as Susan's pain grew more intense she decided to seek help from a more certified doctor. Dr. Lynch could not diagnose the infection and told Susan to seek the aid of one of his colleagues who specialized in dermatology whom was sadly on vacation. She waited for two weeks and finally was able to react the dermatologist.

Sadly, a life changing event was about to unfold during her appointment.

To Miss McKinley's surprise, after she removed the bandages, they found larva growing and squirming within the pores and sores of her breast. Sometimes these wicked creatures would all together simultaneously move around into different crevices.

What she didn't know was that the holes were in fact, deeper than she had originally thought for these larvae were feeding off the fat, tissue, and even milk canals of her bosom.

3B: FWD: Neighbors, beware!

Dear Friends,

I wish to warn you about a new crime ring that is targeting business travelers. This ring is well organized, well funded, has very skilled personnel, and is currently in most major cities and recently very active in New Orleans.

The crime begins when a business traveler goes to a lounge for a drink at the end of the work day.

A person in the bar walks up as they sit alone and offers to buy them a drink. The last thing the traveler remembers until they wake up in a hotel room bath tub, their body submerged to their neck in ice, is sipping that drink. There is a note taped to the wall instructing them not to move and to call 911. A phone is on a small table next to the bathtub for them to call.

The business traveler calls 911 who have become quite familiar with this crime.

The business traveler is instructed by the 911 operator to very slowly and carefully reach behind them and feel if there is a tube protruding from their lower back. The business traveler finds the tube and answers, "Yes." The 911 operator tells them to remain still, having already sent paramedics to help. The operator knows that both of the business traveler's kidneys have been harvested.

This is not a scam or out of a science fiction novel, it is real.

It is documented and confirmable. If you travel or someone close to you travels, please be careful.

4 Accident Legends

4A: Subject: urgent prayer request

Hi all,

I just got off the phone with a sweet friend that is going through some major hard circumstances right now (of her own). However, she just found out that one of her best friends in San Antonio , Yolanda Bear, had a daughter at Virginia Tech that was killed yesterday. Yolanda, her husband and eight year old daughter managed to get an emergency flight out to Virginia and were trying to hurry to get loaded up and go to the airport. In the midst of backing the car in the driveway her husband accidentally ran over their 8 year old daughter and she died as well. Yolanda is in hospital under sedation at the moment. Don`t know about the husband. My friend is trying to get down there to be with her asap but, as I said, has her hands full of difficulties herself here at home and feels very helpless! I would appreciate your prayers for this family. They are believers. My friend had the privilege of leading the student at Tech to the Lord in 2nd grade. My heart just breaks for them.

4B: Boiled brains

Milagros Esteves was a fine girl, but not too bright. One day she got asked a date by one guy she really liked, so on the day of the date she wanted to look pretty.

The day came but she never showed up and as days went by her boy decided to pay her a visit in order to know what happened. Telephone calls didn't work so he went to her home and after waiting for an answer he decided to take a look inside from the back part of the house which had a window to the kitchen only to find out his date laying on the kitchen's floor.

When police arrived they could reconstruct the girls last moments. As time for the meeting came closer Milagros noticed her hair was still too wet to be combed so an idea struck her mind. She would go to the kitchen, get a knife, head for the microwave oven, open its door, falsely lock the door in order to keep it open and dry her hair by placing her head inside the oven.

Doctors diagnosed death by boiled brain.

5 Sex and Scandal Legends

5A: The necrophiliac's gift

A friend of a friend met a man while out on the town one night. One thing led to another, as they say, and she ended up having sex with him. Later, the woman fell ill. She went to the doctor, who examined her and announced that she was "infected with corpse-worms" (maggots). A subsequent investigation revealed that the stranger she had slept with was a pathologist in a local hospital. He had fornicated with a decomposing corpse earlier that same day.

5B: Fwd: Please check your chair when going to the movie theaters!!!!

An incident occurred when a friend's coworker went to sit in a chair and something was poking her. She then got up and found that it was a needle with a little note at the end. It said:

"Welcome to the world of AIDS."

Doctors tested the needle and it was HIV POSITIVE!

BE CAUTIOUS WHEN GOING TO THE MOVIES!!!!

If you must go to the movies, PLEASE, PLEASE Check! One of the safest ways is NOT sticking your hands between the seats, but moving the seat up and down and really look! Most of us just plop down into the seats.

6 Crime Legends

6A: Subject: Remain Alert at All Times

Please Take Notice!!! FW: Important Info!! Please Read!!!!

Hi guys! Please take the time and forward this to any friend who has children! Thanks!

Hi all

Wanted to share something that happened today while shopping at Sam's club. A mother was leaning over looking for meat in the meat dept. and turned around to find her 4 yr. old daughter was missing. I was standing there right beside her and heard her calling her daughter with no luck. I asked a man who worked at Sam's to announce it over the loud speaker that Katie was missing. Well, he did, and let me say he walked right on past me when I asked, went to a pole where there was a phone right there to make his announcement for all doors, and gates to be locked, with a code something or other...so they locked all the doors at once. This took all of 3 min. as soon as I asked this guy to do this.

They found the little girl 5 min. later crunched in a bathroom stall, her head was half shaved, and she was dressed in her underwear with a bag of clothes, a razor, and wig sitting on the floor right besides her. Whoever this person was, took the little girl, brought her into the bathroom, shaved half her head intending to shave it all, undressed her in less than 10 min. It makes me shake to no end.

Please keep an eye out for your kids when going to these shopping places. It only took a few minutes to do all of this, another 5 min and she would have been out the door...I am still in shock that some sick person could do this, let alone in a matter of minutes... The little girl is fine...thank God for fast workers who didn't take any chances. Thanks for reading.

6B: Subject: BE AWARE! READ THIS GIRLS!

Share with your sisters, daughters, nieces, mothers, female friends, EVERYONE.

NEW WARNING!! Incident has been confirmed

In Katy, Tx a man came over and offered his services as a painter to a female putting gas in her car and left his card. She said no, but accepted his card out of kindness and got in the car. The man then got into a car driven by another gentleman. As the lady left the service station and saw the men following her out of the station at the same time. Almost immediately, she started

to feel dizzy and could not catch her breath. She tried to open the window and realized that the odor was on her hand; the same hand which accepted the card from the gentleman at the gas station.

She then noticed the men were immediately behind her and she felt she needed to do something at that moment. She drove into the first driveway and began to honk her horn to ask for help. The men drove away but the lady still felt pretty bad for several minutes after she could finally catch her breath. Apparently there was a substance on the card and could have seriously injured her. The drug is called 'BURUNDANGA' and it is used by people who wish to incapacitate a victim in order to steal or take advantage of them.

Four times greater than date rape drug and is transferable on simple cards. So take heed and make sure you don't accept cards at any given time alone or from someone on the streets. This applies to those making house calls and slipping you a card when they offer their services.

7 Business and Professional Legends

7A: storeroom danger

A stock clerk was sent to clean up a storeroom at their Maui, Hawaii location. When he got back, he was complaining that the storeroom was really filthy, and that he had noticed dried mouse or rat droppings in some areas. Couple of days later, he started feeling like he was coming down with stomach flu, achy joints, headache, and he started throwing up. He went to bed and never really got up. Within two days he was so ill and weak. His blood sugar count was down to 66 and his face and eyeballs were yellow. He was rushed to the emergency at Pali Momi, where they said he was suffering from massive organ failure! He died shortly before midnight.

None of us would have ever made the connection between his job and his death, but the doctors specifically asked if he had been in a warehouse or exposed to dried rat or mouse droppings at any time. They said there is a virus (much like Hanta virus) that lives in dried rat and mouse droppings. Once dried, these droppings are like dust, and can easily be or ingested if a person is not careful to wash their hands and face thoroughly, or wear protective gear.

An autopsy was conducted to verify the doctors' suspicions. This is why it is extremely important to ALWAYS carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas or foods, and wipe off pasta packaging, cereal boxes, etc. Almost everything you buy in a supermarket was stored in a warehouse at one time or another, and stores themselves often have rodents. Most of us remember to wash vegetables and fruit but never think of boxes and cans.

The ugly truth is... even the most modern, upper-class, super store has rats and mice. And their Warehouse most assuredly does. Whenever you buy any canned soft drink, please make sure that you wash the top with running water and soap, or if not available, drink with a straw. A family friend's friend died after drinking a can of soda! A brief investigation by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta discovered the cause. The top was encrusted with dried rat's urine which is toxic and obviously lethal!! Canned drinks and other food stuffs are stored in warehouses and containers that are usually infested with rodents and then get transported to the retail outlets without being properly cleaned.

Please forward this message to the people you care about.

7B: Fwd: Ladies, caution with use of tampons

A woman I work with started using the new Tampax Pearl 5 months ago and that's when she started getting yeast infections. They got worse and worse every month and being experienced with yeast infections, she used over-the-counter treatments. They didn't help. She finally went to her doctor, who did a PAP Smear, which didn't reveal anything.

As it got worse, she finally went to her OB-Gyn, who also did a PAP Smear. It didn't test positive, but bacteria showed up. She was then given a prescription to treat a yeast infection and went home. She went back as it got worse and also when, one day while using the bathroom, a clump of something came out. She had no idea what it was initially and threw it away. She quickly thought better of it and wrapped it up and brought it with her in a Ziploc baggie to yet another visit to the doctor. She had figured out what it was herself and the doctor confirmed it. It was the Tampax Pearl fibers. They had been collecting for the past 5 months! ! She even took an unopened tampon and showed me how the fibers come off so easily. You wouldn't notice because the applicator covers it. And how many people open up a tampon and inspect them?

Well, it hasn't ended yet. When she went in last, the doctor went to get some cultures, but found that her cervix was bleeding and it prevented her from getting all the cultures that she needed. The fibers from the tampon are cutting her and making her bleed. But the blood is having a hard time getting out and so there was a lot of old blood in the way when the doctor tried to take the cultures. Right now, she is not being treated for anything, not until they can figure out how to treat her. Poor woman is uncomfortable and in pain! Most likely, they'll have to do a D&C (did I use the right letters?) to clean it all out. Another girl that I work with also has been using them for a few months and has been having problems, but couldn't figure it out. She won't be using them anymore. I have used a few, just to try them, but will be throwing out any that I have left. I am also going to go home and inspect my regular tampons to see if fibers come off of those also. By the way, my friend's doctor is writing a letter to the company and my friend is looking into filing a lawsuit. This is affecting her in every aspect of her life. She is also very afraid now of TSS. She told me and every woman she knows in order to get the word out, so no one else has to go through this. I said I'd spread the word. I know a yeast infection is an awful thing to experience, but this is so much worse.

8 Legends about Governments

8A: Fwd: The truth about OBAMA

Click on the website and see that there is an unabashedly RACIST running for president. What if one of the white men or Hill were a member of a church that declared itself "UNASHAMEDLY WHITE?" What would the media have done to them already.

Obama mentioned his church during his appearance with Oprah. It's the Trinity Church of Christ. I found this interesting.

Obama's church:

Please read and go to this church's website and read what is written there. It is very alarming.

Barack Obama is a member of this church and is running for President of the U.S. If you look at the first page of their website, you will learn that this congregation has a non-negotiable commitment to Africa. No where is AMERICA even mentioned. Notice too, what color you will need to be if you should want to join Obama's church... B-L-A-C-K!!! Doesn't look like his choice of religion has improved much over his (former?) Muslim upbringing.

Are you aware that Obama's middle name is Mohammed? Strip away his nice looks, the big smile and smooth talk and what do you get? Certainly a racist, as plainly defined by the stated position of his church! And possibly a covert worshiper of the Muslim faith, even today. This guy desires to rule over America while his loyalty is totally vested in a Black Africa!

I cannot believe this has not been all over the TV and newspapers. This is why it is so important to pass this message along to all of our family & friends. To think that Obama has even the slightest chance in the run for the presidency, is really scary.

Click on the link below:

This is the web page for the church Barack Obama belongs to:

www.tucc.org/about.htm

8B: Subject: BIRD FLU - US PROPAGANDA!

"Bird Flu"

Do you know that 'bird flu' was discovered in Vietnam 9 years ago?

Do you know that barely 100 people have died in the whole world in all that time?

Do you know that it was the Americans who alerted us to the efficacy of the human antiviral TAMIFLU as a preventative.

Do you know that TAMIFLU barely alleviates some symptoms of the common flu?

Do you know that its efficacy against the common flu is questioned by a great part of the scientific community?

Do you know that against a SUPPOSED mutant virus such as H5N1, TAMIFLU barely alleviates the illness?

Do you know that to date Avian Flu affects birds only?

Do you know who markets TAMIFLU?

ROCHE LABORATORIES.

Do you know who bought the patent for TAMIFLU from ROCHE LABORATORIES in 1996?

GILEAD SCIENCES INC.

Do you know who was the then president of GILEAD SCIENCES INC. and remains a major shareholder?

DONALD RUMSFELD, the present Secretary of Defence of the USA.

Do you know that the base of TAMIFLU is crushed aniseed?

Do you know who controls 90% of the world's production of this tree?

ROCHE.

Do you know that sales of TAMIFLU were over \$254 million in 2004 and more than \$1000 million in 2005?

Do you know how many more millions ROCHE can earn in the coming months if the business of fear continues?

So the summary of the story is as follows:

Bush's friends decide that the medicine TAMIFLU is the solution for a pandemic that has not yet occurred and that has caused a hundred deaths worldwide in 9 years.

This medicine doesn't so much as cure the common flu.

In normal conditions the virus does not affect humans.

Rumsfeld sells the patent for TAMIFLU to ROCHE for which they pay him a fortune. Roche acquires 90% of the global production of crushed aniseed, the base for the antiviral.

The governments of the entire world threaten a pandemic and then buy industrial quantities of the product from Roche.

So we end up paying for medicine while Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush get richer, thank the RED STATES!

9 Celebrity Legends

9A: Okay. . . I've HAD it. . . REALLY had it with Michelle Obama.

Her pronouncement years ago of being proud for the first time in her adult life of her country PALES in comparison to what she said during a 9-11 commemoration over the weekend.

This anti American socialist blathering FOOL has gone WAY too far.

There she sat on Barack's right side as bagpipers played and an honor guard folded an American Flag. You know how it's done... with reverence and respect, folded precisely and crisply. . . honored. It was during that moment that our nations "First Lady" leaned to her husband's ears and asked the question that should set your TEETH on fire!

All of this for a damned flag?

When Barack nodded, she sat back and gave a look of disgust. There is no audio but you can clearly read her lips (An expert lipreader verified this). HE doesn't show the least bit of surprise at her question!!

9B: Fwd: News: Jon Bon Jovi's Death

Rockstar Jon Bon Jovi (John Francis Bongiovi, Jr) was pronounced dead today after paramedics found him in a coma at his Empress Hotel, city and law enforcement of Asbury Park, NJ sources told The Times after World Christmas Tour concert on The Bamboozle Festival, North Beach Asbury Park.

New Jersey Fire Department-First Aid Captain Douglas Gray told The Times that paramedics responded to a 911 call from the home. When they arrived, Bon Jovi was not breathing.

The paramedics performed CPR and took Bon Jovi to Jersey Shore Medical Center, Ruda said. Hundreds of reporters gathered at the hospital awaiting word on his condition. The sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Bon Jovi team rushed to Bon Jovi's bedside, where he suffered Cardiac arrest.

The detectives plan to interview relatives, friends and Bon Jovi's doctors to try to figure out what happened. The N.J. County coroner's office will determine a cause of death. A New Jersey Fire Department source told The Times that Bon Jovi was in full cardiac arrest when rescue units arrived.

10 Academic Legends

10A: They pushed her down a sewer

About 6 years ago in Indiana, Carmen Winstead was pushed down a sewer opening by 5 girls in her school, trying to embarrass her in front of her school during a fire drill. When she didn't submerge the police were called. They went down and brought up 17 year old Carmen Winstead's body, her neck broke hitting the ladder, then side concrete at the bottom. The girls told everyone she fell... They believed them.

FACT: 2 months ago, 16 year old David Gregory read this post and didn't repost it. When he went to take a shower he heard laughter from his shower, he started freaking out and ran to his computer to repost it, He said goodnight to his mom and went to sleep, 5 hours later his mom woke up in the middle of the night cause of a loud noise, David was gone, that morning a few hours later the police found him in the sewer, his neck broke and his face skin peeled off.

If you don't repost this saying "She was pushed" or "They pushed her down a sewer" Then Carmen will get you, either from a sewer, the toilet, the shower, or when you go to sleep you'll wake up in the sewer, in the dark, then Carmen will come and kill you.

10B: Flunk me if you can

My roommate in college swore this happened in one of his engineering final exams:

The class is taking their exams, and the time runs out. The professor dutifully states, "Time's up. Turn your exams in." All of the students turn their exams in, except for one student still diligently writing away.

The professor tells the student to turn in his exam, but he continues writing away, frantically trying to finish his exam. After a couple of minutes of this, the student proudly makes his way to the front of the room and turns in his exam. The following is supposed to be the verbal exchange:

Professor: "I won't take that. You continued beyond the allotted time limit."

Student: "Do you know who I am?"

Professor: "I don't care who you are, I'm not taking this."

Student: "Do you know who I am?"

Professor: "I told you, I'm not taking this."

Student: "Do you know who I am?"

Professor: "I don't care if you're the Dean's son, you're not turning this exam in. You'll take a zero on this exam!"

Student: "Do you know who I am?"

Professor: "Okay, smartass. I don't know who you are. Why?"

At which point the student grabs the whole pile of finished exams on the professor's desk, throws his in with the pile, and flings the entire pile up in the air, where they naturally intermingle and fall all over the place (thus mixing his up with the other exams).

APPENDIX II

TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS

1A: Fwd: Ladies beware at the gas station!

Cl.1				
Ladies,	beware			at the gas station!
Senser	Pr: mental			Circumstance
Cl.2				
A friend	stopped		at a pay-at-the-pump gas station	to get gas.
Actor	Pr: Material		Range	Goal
Cl.3				
Once	she	filled	her gas tank	after paying at the pump
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	beneficiary	Circumstance
Cl.4				
and	[she]	started to leave		
	Actor	Pr: Material		
Cl.5				
the attendant		inside	came over	the speaker.
Actor		Circumstance	Pr:Material	Goal
Cl.6				
He	told		her	that something happened with her card
Sayer	Pr: Verbal		Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.7				
and that	she		needed to come inside	to pay.
	Actor		PR: Material	Goal
Cl.8				
The lady	was		confused	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.9				
because	the transaction		showed	complete and approved
	Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.10				
She	told		him	that
Sayer	Pr: Verbal		Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.11				

And	[she]	was getting ready	to leave		
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.12					
but	the attendant	once again	urged	her	to come in to pay or else.
	Sayer	Circumstance	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.13					
She	proceeded to go		inside		
Actor	Pr: Material		Range		
Cl.14					
and	[she]	started arguing	with the attendant	about his threat.	
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage	
Cl.15					
He	told	her	to calm down and listen carefully:		
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage		
Cl.16					
He	told	her	that		
Sayer	Pr: Verbal		Receiver	Verbiage	
Cl.17					
while	she	was pumping	gas,		
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
(Verbiage Cl.16)					
Cl.18					
a guy	slipped into		the back seat of her car	on the other side	
Actor	Pr: Material		Range	Circumstance	
(Verbiage Cl.16)					
Cl.19					
and	he	had called	the police.		
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver		
(Verbiage Cl.16)					
Cl.20					
She	immediately		became	scared	
CARRIER			Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.21					
and	[she]	looked	out there in time to see her car door open and the guy slip out.		
	Behaver	Pr:	Circumstance		

		Behavioral	
Cl.22			
The report	is	that the new gang initiation thing is to bring back a woman's body part	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.23			
One way	they	are doing this is crawling	under girls/women's cars
	Actor	Pr: Material	Range
Cl.24			
while	they	're pumping	gas or at grocery stores
	Actor	Pr: Material	Range
			in the night time.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Range
			Circumstance
Cl.25			
Then	they [criminals]	are cutting	the lady's ankles to disable them
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.26			
in order	[for them, criminals]	to kidnap them, kill and dismember	them. [victims]
	Actor	Pr: material	Goal
Cl.27			
The other way is	[by them criminals]	slipping into	unattended cars
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.28			
and	[by them criminals]	kidnapping the women to kill and dismember	them. [victims]
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.29			
Please	[you – reader]	pass this on	to other women, young and old alike.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Beneficiary
Cl.30			
[You – reader]	BE	extra careful	going to and from your car at night.
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance
Cl.31			
If at all possible,	[you – reader]	don't go	alone!
	Actor	Pr: material	Circumstance

Cl.32				
This	is	real!!		
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute		
Cl.33				
The message: 1. ALWAYS	[you]	lock	your car doors,	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.34				
even if	you	're gone	for just second.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance	
Cl.35				
[you – reader]	2. Check	underneath your car	when approaching it for reentry,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.36				
and	[you – reader]	check	in the back	before getting in.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.37				
Always	[you – reader]	be aware	of your surroundings and other individuals in your general vicinity.	particularly at night!
Circumstance	Sensor	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon	Circumstance
Cl.38				
[you – reader]	Send	this	to your friends	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	beneficiary	
Cl.39				
so	as many females as possible		can be made	aware of this new threat,
	Actor		Pr: material	Goal
Cl.40				
and so	your friend	will not be	the next victim.	
	Token	Pr: Relational Id	Value	

1B: Fwd: Grand(ma) Larceny

Cl.1			
A friend of mine		knows	
Senser		Pr: Mental	
Cl.2			
a family who		were	on vacation,
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.3			
driving		through some remote part of the country in their station wagon.	
Pr: Material		Circumstance	
Cl.4			
They		had brought	Grandma along
Actor		Pr: Material	Beneficiary
Cl.5			
even though	she	was	quite elderly and not feeling well,
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.6			
because	her heart	was set on going	on this one last trip with her grandchildren,
	Senser	PR: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.7			
and	they	didn't want to disappoint	her.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Beneficiary
Cl.8			
Unfortunately, at some point during the long drive	Grandma	passed away	in the back seat of the car.
Circumstance	Behavior	Pr: Behavioral	Circumstance
Cl.9			
Her grandchildren,	sitting on either side of her,	became	hysterical.
Carrier	Circumstance	Pr: Relational	Attribute

				1 Att.			
Cl.10							
Since	they		were		several hours away from the nearest sizable city,		
	Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute		
Cl.11							
the father			did			the only thing	
Actor			Pr: Material			Goal	
Cl.12							
he			could think of to remedy			the situation.	
Senser			Pr: Mental			Phenomenon	
Cl.13							
He	wrapped		Grandma's corpse		in a thick blanket,		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		Range			
Cl.14							
secured			it		to the luggage rack on top of the station wagon,		
Pr: Material			Goal		Circumstance		
Cl.15							
and					drove on.		
					Pr: Material		
Cl.16							
When	they		finally reached			the outskirts of civilization	
	Actor		Pr: Material			Goal	
Cl.17							
the father			stopped			at a service station	
Actor			Pr: Material			Goal	
Cl.18							
and	everyone		clambered out		of the car		
	Actor		Pr: Material		Range		
Cl.19							
while	he	used	a payphone	to call		authorities	
	Actor	Pr: material	Range	Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.20							
and				report		the death.	
				Pr: Verbal		Verbiage	
Cl.21							
Understandably nervous and upset,			he		didn't realize he had left	the keys in the ignition.	
Circumstance			Actor		Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.22							

When	the family	went back	to the car
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.23			
they			found
Behaver			Pr: Behavioral
Cl.24			
it	had been stolen,		along with all their possessions... and Grandma.
Goal	Pr: Material		Circumstance

2A: Spiders under toilet seat

Cl. 1			
If	you	haven't already heard	about it in the news,
	Behaver	Pr: Behavioral	
Cl.2			
here		is	what happened.
Token		Pr: Relational Id.	Value
Cl.3			
3 women in Chicago,	turned up	at hospitals	over a 5 day period, all with the same symptoms. Fever, chills, and vomiting, followed by muscular collapse, paralysis, and finally, death.
Actor	Pr:Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.4			
There were			no outward signs of trauma.
Pr: Existencial			Existent
Cl.5			
Autopsy results		showed	toxicity in the blood.
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.6			
These women		did not know	each other,
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.7			
and	[these women]	seemed to have	nothing in common.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.8			
It	was discovered,	however,	that
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.9			
they	had all visited	the same restaurant	(Big Chappies, at Blare Airport), within days of their deaths.
Actor	Pr: Material	Range	Circumstance
Cl.10			

The health department	descended	on the restaurant,		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.11				
[the health department]	shutting	it down.		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.12				
The food, water, and air conditioning	were all inspected and tested,	to no avail.		
Goal	Pr: Material	Circumstance		
Cl.13				
The big break came when	a waitress at the restaurant	was rushed	to the hospital with similar symptoms.	
	Goal	Pr: Material	Circumstance	
Cl.14				
She	told	doctors	that	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage	
Cl.15				
she	had been	on vacation,		
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att	Attribute		
Cl.16				
and [the victim]	had only went	to the restaurant		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.17				
to pick up		her check.		
Pr: Material		Goal		
Cl.18				
She	did not eat or drink	while she was there,		
Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance		
Cl.19				
but	had used	the restroom.		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.20				
That is when	one toxicologist,	remembering an article he had read,	drove out	to the restaurant,
	Actor	Circumstance	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl. 21				
went		into the restroom,		
Pr: Material		Goal		
Cl.22				
and	lifted	the toilet seat.		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.23				
Under the seat, out of normal view,		was	small spider.	
Attribute		Pr: Relational Att	Carrier	
Cl.24				
The spider		was captured and brought back	to the lab,	
Goal		Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.25				
where	it	was determined to be	the South American Blush Spider	

			(arachnius gluteus),	
	Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value	
Cl.26				
so		named	because of its reddened flesh color.	
		Pr: Verbal	Circumstance	
Cl.27				
This spider's venom		is	extremely toxic,	
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.28				
but		can take several days	to take	effect.
		Circumstance	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.29				
They		live	in cold, dark, damp, climates,	
Behaver		Pr: Behavioral	Circumstance	
Cl.30				
and		toilet rims	provide	just the right atmosphere.
		Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.31				
Several days later		a lawyer from Los Angeles	showed up	at a hospital emergency room.
Circumstance		Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.32				
Before his death,	he	told	the doctor,	that
Circumstance	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.33				
he		had been	away on business,	
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.34				
had taken			a flight from New York,	
Pr: Material			Goal	
Cl.35				
changing			planes in Chicago,	
Pr: Material			Goal	
Cl.36				
before		returning	home.	
Circumstance		Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.37				
He		did not visit	Big Chappies	while there.
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.38				
He		did, as did all of the other victims, have	what was determined to be a puncture wound, on his right buttock.	
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.39				
Investigators		discovered	that	
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.40				
the flight		he	was	on

	Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value
Cl.41			
had originated		in South America.	
Pr: Material		Range	
Cl.42			
The Civilian Aeronautics Board (CAB)	ordered	an immediate inspection of the toilets of all flights from South America,	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.43			
and	discovered	the Blush spider's nests on 4 different planes!	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.44			
It is now believed		that	
Pr: Existencial		Existent	
Cl.45			
these spiders	can be	anywhere in the country.	
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value	
Cl.46			
So please, before	you	use	a public toilet,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.47			
lift	the seat	to check for spiders.	
Pr: Material	Range	Goal	
Cl.48			
It	can save	your life!	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.49			
And please	pass	this on	to everyone you care about
	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	Receiver

2B: Fwd: This is a true story which happened on 9-11-01

Cl.1			
James Crane	worked	on the 101st of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance	
Cl.2			
He	is	blind	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.3			
so	he	has	a golden retriever named Daisy.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.4			
After	the plane	hit	20 stories below,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.5			

James	knew		that	
Senser	Pr: Mental		Phenomenon	
Cl.6				
he	was		doomed,	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.7				
so	he	let Daisy go	[Daisy]	out of and act of love.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.8				
With tears in her eyes	she	darted away		into the darkened hallway.
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9				
Choking on the fumes of the jet fuel and the smoke	he	was	just waiting to die.	
Circumstance	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.10				
About 30 minutes later,	Daisy	comes back	along with James' boss,	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance	
Cl.11				
who	Daisy	just happened to pick up	on floor 112.	
Goal	Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance	
Cl.12				
On her first run of the building,	she	leads	James, James' boss, and about 300 more people	out of the doomed building.
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.13				
But	she	wasn't	through	yet,
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance
Cl.14				
she	knew			
Senser	Pr: Mental			
Cl.15				
there were	others			
Pr: Existential	Existent			
Cl.16				
who	were		trapped.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.17				
So, highly against James' wishes	she	ran back	in the building.	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Range	
Cl.18				
On her second run,	she	saved	392 lives.	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.19				
Again	she	went back	in.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Range	

Cl.20				
During this run,		the building		collapses.
Circumstance		Behavior		Pr: Behavioral
Cl.21				
James		hears		about this
Behavior		Pr: Behavioral		Circumstance
Cl.22				
and [James]		falls		on his knees into tears.
Behavior		Pr: Behavioral		Circumstance
Cl.23				
Against all known odds,		Daisy		makes it out
Circumstance		Actor		Pr: Material
Cl.24				
but this time		she		is
Circumstance		Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.
				carried by a firefighter.
				Attribute
Cl.25				
"She		lead us		right to the people,
Actor		Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.26				
before		she		got
Circumstance		Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.
				injured"
				Attribute
Cl.27				
the fireman		explained.		
Sayer		Pr: Verbal		
Cl.28				
Her final run		saved		another 273 lives.
Actor		Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.29				
She		suffered		acute smoke inhalation, severe burns on all four paws, and a broken leg,
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute
Cl.30				
but		she		saved
		Actor		Pr: Material
				967 lives.
				Goal
Cl.31				
The next week,		Mayor Guilaini		rewards
Circumstance		Actor		Pr: Material
				Daisy
				Goal
				with the Canine medal of Honor of New York.
				Range
Cl.32				
Daisy		is		the first civilian Canine to win such an honor.
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute

3A: Fwd: Wash before Wearing!

Cl.1				
It		is		horrible.
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute

Cl.2				
Guys	tell	your wife, sisters, girlfriends, and girl cousins		wash bra before wearing.
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver		Verbiage
Cl.3				
ALL PLEASE	WASH	ALL BRAS, UNDERWEAR	WHEN YOU BUY BEFORE WEARING THEM.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.4				
WE			DO NOT KNOW	
Senser			Pr: Mental	
Cl.5				
WHAT PARASITE		IS	IN OUR CLOTHES	
Attribute		Pr: Relational Att.	Carrier	
Cl.6				
WHEN	WE	BUY	THEM.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.7				
FORWARD			TO EVERYBODY YOU KNOW.	
Pr: Verbal			Receiver	
Cl.8				
LET ME		FORE WARN	YOU	
Sayer		Pr: Verbal	Receiver	
Cl.9				
THIS		IS	SO SQUIMISH,	
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.10				
I		FEEL	LIKE	
Senser		Pr: Behavioral	Phenomenon	
Cl.11				
SOMETHING		IS CRAWLING	ALL OVER ME	
Actor		Pr: Material	Range	
Cl.12				
EVEN AS	I	SEND	THIS	TO YOU.
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	Receiver
Cl.13				
BE AWARE.				
Pr: Mental [Senser: reader]				
Cl.14				
IT		IS	SO GROTESQUE.	
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.15				
PLEASE	WASH	YOUR UNDERWEAR	BEFORE WEARING. PREFERABLY IN BOILING HOT WATER.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.16				
This		is not	for the weak;	
Token		Pr: Relational Id.	Value	

Cl.17				
I	have never seen		anything like this.	
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.18				
Read	the article		first	
Pr: Material	Goal			
Cl.19				
before	looking		at the picture.	
	Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.20				
This	looks		horrible.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.21				
Oh my God!!!!!!! Ladies	this	could happen	to you	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.22				
and Guys	this	could happen	to your wife, girlfriend, partner	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.23				
so please			BEWARE,	
			Pr: Mental	
Cl.24				
and also	warn		others.	
	Pr: Verbal		Receiver	
Cl.25				
It	has been reported		that	
	Pr: Verbal		Verbiage	
Cl.26				
this	is happening	in Zimbabwe	as well,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Range		
Cl.27				
please	make sure you iron	your undergarments	before you wear them	
	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.28				
and	make sure	that your clothes are ironed	when they are dry and not damp.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.29				
The picture	is		horrible	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.30				
but	I	felt	that	
	Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon	
Cl.31				
I	should share		with you.	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal		Receiver	
Cl.32				
After	anthropologist Susan McKinley	came back	home	from an expedition in South America,

	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Range
Cl.33				
she	noticed	a very strange rash	on her left breast.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.34				
Nobody	knew		what it was	
Senser	Pr: Mental		Phenomenon	
Cl.35				
and	she	quickly	dismissed	it
	senser		Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.36				
believing		that the holes would leave in time.		
Pr: Mental		Phenomenon		
Cl.37				
Upon her return	she	decided to see	a doctor	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.38				
after	she	started developing	intense pains.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.39				
The doctor,	not knowing		the exact severity of the disease,	
Senser	Pr: Mental		Phenomenon	
Cl.40				
gave	her	antibiotics and special creams.		
Pr: Material	Goal	Range		
Cl.41				
As time lapsed	the pain		did not subside	
	Actor		Pr: Material	
Cl.42				
and	her left breast	became	more inflamed	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.43				
and	started to bleed.			
	Pr: Material			
Cl.44				
She	decided to bandage		her sores	
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.45				
however as	Susan's pain	grew	more intense	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.46				
she	decided to seek	help	from a more certified doctor.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Range	
Cl.47				
Dr. Lynch	could not diagnose		the infection	
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.48				
and	told		Susan	

	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	
Cl.49			
to seek	the aid	of one of his colleagues who specialized in dermatology	
Pr: Material	Goal	Range	
Cl.50			
whom	was	sadly on vacation.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.51			
She	waited	for two weeks	
Actor	Pr: Material	Range	
Cl.52			
and finally	was	able to react the dermatologist.	
	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.53			
Sadly,	a life changing event	was about to unfold	during her appointment.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Range
Cl.54			
To Miss McKinley's surprise, after	she	removed	the bandages,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.55			
they	found	larva growing	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.56			
and	squirming	within the pores and sores of her breast.	
	Pr: Material	Range	
Cl.57			
Sometimes	these wicked creatures	would all together simultaneously move	around into different crevices.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Range
Cl.58			
What she didn't know	was	that	
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value	
Cl.59			
the holes	were	in fact, deeper	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.60			
than	she	had originally thought	
	Senser	Pr: Mental	
Cl.61			
for	these larvae	were feeding	off the fat, tissue, and even milk canals of her bosom.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal

3B: FWD: Neighbors, beware

Cl.1				
Dear Friends,	I	wish to warn	you	about a new crime ring
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.2				
that		is targeting		business travelers.
Actor		Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.3				
This ring		is		well organized, well funded,
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute
Cl.4				
has			very skilled personnel,	
Pr: Relational Att.			Attribute	
Cl.5				
and.	is	currently in most major cities and recently very active in New Orleans		
	Pr: relational Att.	Attributre		
Cl.6				
The crime		begins		when
Actor		Pr: Material		Circumstance
Cl.7				
a business traveler	goes	to a lounge for a drink	at the end of the work day.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.8				
A person in the bar			walks up	
Actor			Pr: Material	
Cl.9				
as	they	sit	alone	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute
Cl.10				
and		offers to buy		them a drink.
		Pr: Material		Beneficiary Goal
Cl.11				
The last thing		the traveler		remembers
Phenomenon		Senser		Pr: Mental
Cl.12				
until	they	wake up	in a hotel room bath tub,	
	Behavior	Pr: Behavioral		Circumstance
Cl.13				
their body		submerged		to their neck in ice,
Behaver		Pr: Behavioral		Circumstance
Cl.14				
is sipping			that drink.	
Pr: Material			Goal	
Cl.15				

There is		a note taped to the wall
Pr: Existential		Existent
Cl.16		
instructing		them
Pr: Verbal		Receiver
Cl.17		
not to move		
Pr: Material		
Cl.18		
and	to call	911.
	Pr: Verbal	Receiver
Cl.19		
A phone	is	on a small table next to the bathtub
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.20		
for	them	to call.
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal
Cl.21		
The business traveler	calls	911
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver
Cl.22		
who	have become	quite familiar with this crime.
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.23		
The business traveler	is instructed	by the 911 operator
Receiver	Pr: Verbal	Sayer
Cl.24		
to very slowly and carefully	reach	behind them
	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.25		
and	feel	if there is a tube protruding from their lower back.
	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.26		
The business traveler	finds	the tube
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.27		
and	answers,	"Yes."
	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage
Cl.28		
The 911 operator	tells	them
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver
Cl.29		
to remain		still,
Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.30		
having already sent		paramedics to help.
Pr: Material		Goal

Cl.31		
The operator	knows	that
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.32		
both of the business traveler's kidneys	have been harvested.	
Goal	Pr: Material	
Cl.33		
This	is	not a scam or out of a science fiction novel,
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.34		
it	is	real.
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.35		
It	is	documented and confirmable.
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.36		
If	you	travel
	Actor	Pr: Material
Cl.37		
or	someone close to you	travels,
	Actor	Pr: Material
Cl.38		
please	be	careful.
	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute

4A: Subject: urgent prayer request

Cl.1			
Hi all,	I	just got off	the phone with a sweet friend
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.2			
that	is going through	some major hard circumstances right now (of her own).	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.3			
However,	she	just found out	that one of her best friends in San Antonio ,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.4			
Yolanda Bear,	had	a daughter at Virginia Tech	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.5			
that	was killed	yesterday.	
Goal	Pr: Material	Circumstance	

Cl.6			
Yolanda, her husband and eight year old daughter	managed to get		an emergency flight out to Virginia
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.7			
and	were trying to hurry to get loaded up		
	Pr: Material		
Cl.8			
and	go	to the airport.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9			
In the midst of backing the car in the driveway	her husband	accidentally ran over	their 8 year old daughter
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.10			
and	she	died	as well.
	Behavior	Pr: Behavioral	
Cl.11			
Yolanda	is	in hospital under sedation at the moment.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.12			
Don't know	about the husband.		
Pr: Mental	Phenomenon		
Cl.13			
My friend	is trying to get	down there to be with her asap	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.14			
but, as	I	said,	
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	
Cl.15			
has	her hands full of difficulties herself here at home		
Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute		
Cl.16			
and	feels	very helpless!	
	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.17			
I	would appreciate	your prayers	for this family.
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Beneficiary
Cl.18			
They	are	believers.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.19			
My friend	had	the privilege of leading the student at Tech to the Lord in 2nd grade.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.20			
My heart	just breaks	for them.	

Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
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4B: Boiled brains

Cl.1				
Milagros Esteves	was		a fine girl, but not too bright.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.2				
One day	she	got asked	a date	by one guy
	Receiver	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	Sayer
Cl.3				
she	really		Liked,	
Senser			Pr: Mental	
Cl.4				
so on the day of the date	she	wanted to look	pretty.	
	Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon	
Cl.5				
The day came but	she	never showed up		
	Actor	Pr: Material		
Cl.6				
and as days went by	her boy	decided to pay	her	a visit in order to know what happened.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Beneficiary	Goal
Cl.7				
Telephone calls			didn't work	
Actor			Pr: Material	
Cl.8				
so	he	went	to her home	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9				
and after waiting for an answer	he	decided to take a look	inside from the back part of the house	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.10				
which	had		a window to the kitchen	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.11				
only	to find		out	
	Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.12				
his date	laying		on the kitchen's floor.	
Behaver	Pr: Behavioral			
Cl.13				
When	police		arrived	
	Actor		Pr: Material	
Cl.14				
they	could reconstruct		the girls last moments.	
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal	

Cl.15			
As time for the meeting came closer		Milagros	noticed
		Senser	Pr: Mental
Cl.16			
her hair		was	still too wet to be combed
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.17			
so	an idea	struck	her mind.
		Actor	Pr: Material Goal
Cl.18			
She		would go	to the kitchen,
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.19			
get		a knife,	
Pr: Material			Goal
Cl.20			
head		for the microwave oven,	
Pr: Material			Goal
Cl.21			
open		its door,	
Pr: Material			Goal
Cl.22			
falsely		lock	the door
		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.23			
in order		to keep	it open
		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.24			
and		dry	her hair
		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.25			
by	placing	her head	inside the oven.
		Pr: Material	Beneficiary Goal
Cl.26			
Doctors		diagnosed	death by boiled brain.
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal

5A: The necrophiliac's gift

Cl.1				
A friend of a friend		met	a man	while out on the town one night.
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.2				
One thing led to another, as they say, and		she	ended up having sex	with him.
		Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.3				
Later,		the woman	fell	ill.
		Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute

Cl.4			
She	went	to the doctor,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.5			
who	examined	her	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.6			
and	announced	that	
	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.7			
she	was	"infected with corpse-worms" (maggots).	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.8			
A subsequent investigation	revealed	that	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9			
the stranger she had slept with	was	a pathologist in a local hospital.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.10			
He	had fornicated	with a decomposing corpse	earlier that same day.
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance

5B: Fwd: Please check your chair when going to the movie theaters!!!!

Cl.1			
An incident	occurred		
Actor	Pr: Material		
Cl.2			
when	a friend's coworker	went to sit	in a chair
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.3			
and	something	was poking	her.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.4			
She	then	got up	
Actor		Pr: Material	
Cl.5			
and	found	that	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.6			
it	was	a needle with a little note at the end.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.7			
It	said:	"Welcome to the world of AIDS."	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.8			
Doctors	tested	the needle	

Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9			
and	it	was	HIV POSITIVE!
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.10			
BE		CAUTIOUS	
Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.11			
WHEN	GOING	TO THE MOVIES!!!!	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.12			
If	you	must go	to the movies,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.13			
PLEASE, PLEASE		Check!	
		Pr: Material	
Cl.14			
One of the safest ways	is NOT sticking	your hands	between the seats,
	Pr: Material	Goal	Range
Cl.15			
but	moving	the seat up and down	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.16			
and really		look!	
		Pr: Material	
Cl.17			
Most of us	just plop down	into the seats.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Range	

6A: Subject: Remain Alert at All Times

Cl.1				
Please		Take		Notice!!!
		Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.2				
FW: Important Info!! Please			Read!!!!	
			Pr: Material	
Cl.3				
Hi guys! Please		take the time and forward		this
		Pr: verbal		Verbiage
Cl.4				
to	any friend who	has	children!	Thanks!
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.5				
Hi all		Wanted to share		something
		Pr: Verbal		Verbiage
Cl.6				

that	happened	today while shopping at Sam's club.	
	Pr: Material	Circumstance	
Cl.7			
A mother	was leaning over looking	for meat	in the meat dept.
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.8			
and	turned around to find		
	Pr: Material		
Cl.9			
her 4 yr. old daughter	was	missing.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.10			
I	was standing	there right beside her	
Behavior	Pr: Behavioral	Circumstance	
Cl.11			
and	heard		
	Pr: Behavioral		
Cl.12			
her	calling	her daughter	with no luck.
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	
Cl.13			
I	asked	a man	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	
Cl.14			
who	worked	at Sam's	
Actor	Pr: Material	Range	
Cl.15			
to announce	it	over the loud speaker	
Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	Circumstance	
Cl.16			
that	Katie	was	missing.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.17			
Well,	he	did,	
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	
Cl.18			
and	let	me	say
		Sayer	Pr: Verbal
Cl.19			
he	walked	right on past me	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.20			
when	I	asked,	
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	
Cl.21			
went	to a pole		
Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.22			
where	there was	a phone right there	
	Pr: Existencial	Existent	
Cl.23			

to make	his announcement for all doors, and gates to be locked, with a code something or other...			
Pr: Material	Goal			
Cl.24				
so	they	locked	all the doors at once.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.25				
This took all of 3 min. as soon as	I	asked	this guy	to do this.
Circumstance	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.26				
They	found	the little girl	5 min. later	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.27				
crunched		in a bathroom stall,		
Pr: Material		Circumstance		
Cl.28				
her head	was		half shaved,	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.		Attribute	
Cl.29				
and	she	was	dressed in her underwear with a bag of clothes, a razor, and wig sitting on the floor right besides her.	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.30				
Whoever	this person		was,	
Token	Value		Pr: Relational Id.	
Cl.31				
took		the little girl,		
Pr: Material		Goal		
Cl.32				
brought		her into the bathroom,		
Pr: Material		Goal		
Cl.33				
shaved		half her head intending to shave it all,		
Pr: Material		Goal		
Cl.34				
undressed		her in less than 10 min.		
Pr: Material		Goal		
Cl.35				
It		makes		me shake to no end.
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.36				
Please	keep	an eye out for your kids	when going to these shopping places.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance	
Cl.37				
It	only	took	a few minutes	to do all of this,
Actor		Pr: Material	Circumstance	Goal

Cl.38			
another 5 min and	she	would have been	out the door...
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.39			
I	am	still in shock	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.40			
that	some sick person	could do	this, let alone in a matter of minutes...
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.41			
The little girl	is	fine...	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.42			
thank God for	fast workers who	didn't take	any chances.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.43			
Thanks for reading.			
Pr: Verbal			

6B: Subject: BE AWARE! READ THIS GIRLS!

Cl.1			
Share	with your sisters, daughters, nieces, mothers, female friends, EVERYONE.	NEW WARNING!!	
Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage	
Cl.2			
Incident	has been	confirmed	In Katy, Tx
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance
Cl.3			
a man	came over and offered	his services as a painter	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.4			
to	a female	putting	gas in her car
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.5			
and	left	his card.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.6			
She	said	no ,	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.7			
but	accepted	his card	out of kindness
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.8			
and	got	in the car.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9			
The man	then	got into	a car driven by another gentleman.

Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.10			
As	the lady	left	the service station
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.11			
and	saw	the men	following her out of the station at the same time.
	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.12			
Almost immediately,	she	started to feel	dizzy
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.13			
and	could not catch	her breath.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.14			
She	tried to open	the window	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.15			
and	realized	that	
	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon	
Cl.16			
the odor	was	on her hand;	
Attribute	Pr: Relational Att.	Carrier	
Cl.17			
the same hand which	accepted	the card from the gentleman	at the gas station.
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.18			
She	then	noticed	
Senser		Pr: Mental	
Cl.19			
the men	were	immediately behind her	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.20			
and	she	felt she needed to do	something at that moment.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
		Goal	Circumstance
Cl.21			
She	drove	into the first driveway	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.22			
and	began to honk	her horn	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.23			
to ask		for help.	
Pr: Verbal		Verbiage	
Cl.24			
The men	drove	away	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.25			

but	the lady	still felt	pretty bad	for several minutes
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance
Cl.26				
after	she	could finally catch	her breath.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.27				
Apparently	there was	a substance on the card		
	Pr: Existencial	Existent		
Cl.28				
and	could have seriously injured	her.		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.29				
The drug	is called	'BURUNDANGA'		
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value		
Cl.30				
and	it	is used	by people	who wish to incapacitate a victim in order to steal or take advantage of them.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Beneficiary	Goal
Cl.31				
Four times greater than date rape drug and	is	transferable on simple cards.		
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute		
Cl.32				
So	take	heed		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.33				
and make sure	you	don't accept	cards	at any given time alone or from someone on the streets.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.34				
This applies	to those	making	house calls	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.35				
and slipping you a card when	they	offer	their services.	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	

7A: storeroom danger

Cl.1			
A stock clerk	was sent to clean up	a storeroom	at their Maui, Hawaii location.
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.2			
When	he	got back,	
	Actor	Pr: Material	

Cl.3			
he	was complaining	that	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.4			
the storeroom	was	really filthy,	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.5			
and that	he	had noticed	dried mouse or rat droppings in some areas.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.6			
Couple of days later,	he	started feeling	like he was coming down with stomach flu, achy joints, headache,
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.7			
and	he	started throwing up.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	
Cl.8			
He	went	to bed	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9			
and		never really got up.	
		Pr: Material	
Cl.10			
Within two days	he	was	so ill and weak.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.11			
His blood sugar count	was	down to 66	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.12			
and	his face and eyeballs	were	yellow.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.13			
He	was rushed	to the emergency at Pali Momi,	
Beneficiary	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.14			
where	they	said	
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	
Cl.15			
he	was	suffering from massive organ failure!	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.16			
He	died	shortly before midnight.	
Behavior	Behavioral	Circumstance	
Cl.17			
None of us	would have ever made	the connection between his job and his death,	

Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.18		
but	the doctors	specifically asked if
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal Verbiage
Cl.19		
he	had been	in a warehouse or exposed to dried rat or mouse droppings at any time.
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.20		
They	said	there is a virus (much like Hanta virus)
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage
Cl.21		
that	lives	in dried rat and mouse droppings.
Behaver	Pr: Behavioral	Circumstance
Cl.22		
Once dried,	these droppings	are like dust, and can easily be or ingested
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att. Attribute
Cl.23		
if	a person	is not careful to wash their hands and face thoroughly, or wear protective gear.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att. Attribute
Cl.24		
An autopsy	was conducted to verify	the doctors' suspicions.
	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.25		
This is why	it	is extremely important
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att. Attribute
Cl.26		
to ALWAYS carefully rinse off		the tops of any canned sodas or foods,
Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.27		
and	wipe off	pasta packaging, cereal boxes, etc.
	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.28		
Almost everything	you	buy in a supermarket
Goal	Actor	Pr: Material range
Cl.29		
was	stored in a warehouse	at one time or another,
Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance
Cl.30		
and	stores themselves	often have rodents.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att. Attribute
Cl.31		
Most of us	remember to wash	vegetables and fruit
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.32		
but	never think	of boxes and cans.
	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon

Cl.33			
The ugly truth		is...	
Token		Pr: relational Id.	
Cl.34			
even the most modern, upper-class, super store		has	rats and mice.
Carrier		Pr: relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.35			
And their Warehouse		most assuredly does.	
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	
Cl.36			
Whenever	you	buy	any canned soft drink,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.37			
please make sure that	you	wash	the top with running water and soap,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.38			
or if not available,		drink	with a straw.
		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.39			
A family friend's friend		died	after drinking a can of soda!
Behaver		Pr: Behavioral	Circumstance
Cl.40			
A brief investigation by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta		discovered	the cause.
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.41			
The top		was	encrusted with dried rat's urine
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.42			
which		is	toxic and obviously lethal!!
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.43			
Canned drinks and other food stuffs		are	stored in warehouses and containers
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.44			
that		are	usually infested with rodents
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.45			
and then		get	transported to the retail outlets without being properly cleaned.
		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.46			
Please		forward	this message
		Pr: Verbal	Receiver
		Verbiage	

7B: Fwd: Ladies, caution with use of tampons

Cl.1			
A woman I work with	started using	the new Tampax Pearl 5 months ago	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.2			
and that's when	she	started getting	yeast infections.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.3			
They	got	worse and worse	every month
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance
Cl.4			
and	being	experienced with yeast infections,	
	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.5			
she	used	over-the-counter treatments.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.6			
They	didn't help.		
Actor	Pr: Material		
Cl.7			
She	finally went	to her doctor,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.8			
who	did	a PAP Smear,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9			
which	didn't reveal	anything.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.10			
As	it	got	worse,
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.11			
she	finally went	to her OB-Gyn,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.12			
who also	did	a PAP Smear.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.13			
It	didn't test	positive,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.14			
but	bacteria	showed up.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	
Cl.15			
She	was then given	a prescription to treat a yeast infection	

Beneficiary	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.16			
and	went	home.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.17			
She	went	back	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.18			
as	it	got	worse
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.19			
and also when, one day while using the bathroom,	a clump of something	came out.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	
Cl.20			
She	had	no idea	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.21			
what	it	was	initially
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Circumstance
Cl.22			
and	threw	it away.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.23			
She	quickly thought	better of it	
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon	
Cl.24			
and	wrapped	it up	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.25			
and	brought	it with her in a Ziploc baggie to yet another visit to the doctor.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.26			
She	had figured out	what it was herself	
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon	
Cl.27			
and	the doctor	confirmed	it.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.28			
It	was	the Tampax Pearl fibers.	
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value	
Cl.29			
They	had been collecting	for the past 5 months! !	
Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance	
Cl.30			
She	even took	an unopened tampon	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.31			
and	showed	me how the fibers come off so	

		easily.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.32			
You	wouldn't notice	because	
Senser	Pr: Mental		
Cl.33			
the applicator	covers	it.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.34			
And how many people	open up	a tampon	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.35			
and	inspect	them?	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.36			
Well,	it	hasn't	ended yet.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.37			
When	she	went	in last,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.38			
the doctor	went to get	some cultures,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.39			
but	found	that her cervix was bleeding	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.40			
and	it	prevented	her from getting all the cultures that she needed.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.41			
The fibers from the tampon	are cutting her and making her	bleed.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.42			
But	the blood	is having	a hard time getting out
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.43			
and so	there was	a lot of old blood in the way	
	Pr: Existencial	Existent	
Cl.44			
when	the doctor	tried to take	the cultures.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.45			
Right now,	she	is not being	treated for anything,
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.46			
not until	they	can figure out	how to treat her.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.47			
Poor woman	is	uncomfortable and in pain!	

Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.48			
Most likely,	they	'll have to do	a D&C (did I use the right letters?) to clean it all out.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.49			
Another girl that	I	work	with
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.50			
also		has been using	them for a few months
		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.51			
and		has been having	problems,
		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.52			
but		couldn't figure	it out.
		Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.53			
She		won't be using	them anymore.
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl. 54			
I		have used	a few,
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.55			
just		to try	them,
		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.56			
but		will be throwing out	any that I have left.
		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.57			
I		am also going to go home and inspect	my regular tampons
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.58			
to see if	fibers	come off	of those also.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.59			
By the way,	my friend's doctor	is writing	a letter to the company
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.60			
and	my friend	is looking	into filing a lawsuit.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.61			
This		is affecting	her in every aspect of her life.
Actor		Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.62			
She		is	also very afraid now of TSS.
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.63			

She	told	me and every woman she knows	in order to get the word out,
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	
Cl.64			
so	no one else	has to go	through this.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.65			
I	said	I'd spread the word.	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.66			
I	know	a yeast infection is an awful thing to experience,	
Senser	Pr: mental	Phenomenon	
Cl.67			
but	this	is	so much worse!
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute

8A: Fwd: The truth about OBAMA

Cl.1				
Click	on the website			
Pr: Material	Goal			
Cl.2				
and	see	that		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.3				
there is	an unabashedly RACIST			
Pr: Existencial	Existent			
Cl.4				
running	for president.			
Pr: Material	Goal			
Cl.5				
What if	one of the white men or Hill	were	a member of a church	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.6				
that	declared	itself "UNASHAMEDLY WHITE?"		
	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage		
Cl.7				
What would	the media	have done	to them	already.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance
Cl.8				
Obama	mentioned	his church	during his appearance with Oprah.	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	Circumstance	
Cl.9				
It	's	the Trinity Church of Christ.		
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value		
Cl.10				
I	found	this interesting.		
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon		

Cl.11			
Obama's church: Please		read	
		Pr: Material	
Cl.12			
and	go	to this church's website	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.13			
and	read	what is written there.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.14			
It	is	very alarming.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.15			
Barack Obama	is	a member of this church	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.16			
and.	is running	for President of the U.S	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.17			
If	you	look	at the first page of their website,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.18			
you		will learn	
Senser		Pr: Mental	
Cl.19			
that	this congregation	has	a non-negotiable commitment to Africa.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.20			
No where	is	AMERICA even mentioned.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.21			
Notice		too,	
Pr: Mental		Phenomenon	
Cl.22			
what color	you	will need to be	
Attribute	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	
Cl.23			
if	you	should want to join	Obama's church... B-L-A-C-K!!!
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.24			
Doesn't look like	his choice of religion	has improved much over	his (former?) Muslim upbringing.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.25			
Are	you	aware	that
	Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.26			
Obama's middle name	is	Mohammed?	
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value	

Cl.27			
Strip away		his nice looks, the big smile and smooth talk	
Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.28			
and	what do	you	get?
		Actor	Pr: Material
Cl.29			
Certainly a racist,	as plainly defined	by the stated position of his church!	And possibly a covert worshiper of the Muslim faith, even today.
Verbiage	Pr: Verbal	Sayer	
Cl.30			
This guy		desires	to rule over America
Senser		Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.31			
while	his loyalty	is totally vested	in a Black Africa!
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.32			
I		cannot believe	
Senser		Pr: Mental	
Cl.33			
this	has not been	all over the TV and newspapers.	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.34			
This is why	it	is	so important
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.35			
to pass		this message along	to all of our family & friends.
Pr: Verbal		Verbiage	Receiver
Cl.36			
To think that [Obama has even the slightest chance in the run for the presidency],		is	really scary.
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.37			
[Obama	has	even the slightest chance in the run for the presidency],	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.38			
Click		on the link below:	
Pr: Material		Goal	
Cl.39			
This		is	the web page for the church
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.40			
Barack Obama		belongs to:	www.tucc.org/about.htm
Carrier		Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute

8B: Subject: BIRD FLU - US PROPAGANDA!

Cl.1				
"Bird Flu" Do you know that	'bird flu'	was	discovered in Vietnam 9 years ago?	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.2				
Do you know that	barely 100 people	have died	in the whole world in all that time?	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.3				
Do you know that	it	was	the Americans	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.4				
who	alerted us	to the efficacy of the human antiviral TAMIFLU as a preventative.		
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage		
Cl.5				
Do you know that	TAMIFLU	barely alleviates	some symptoms of the common flu?	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.6				
Do you know that	its efficacy against the common flu	is	questioned by a great part of the scientific community?	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.7				
Do you know that	against a SUPPOSED mutant virus such as H5N1, TAMIFLU	barely alleviates	the illness?	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.8				
Do you know that to date	Avian Flu	affects	birds only?	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.9				
Do you know	who	markets	TAMIFLU?	ROCHE LABORATORIES.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Actor
Cl.10				
Do you know	who	bought	the patent for TAMIFLU from ROCHE LABORATORIES in 1996?	GILEAD SCIENCES INC.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Actor
Cl.11				
Do you know	who	was	the then president of GILEAD SCIENCES INC.	
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.12				

and	remains	a major shareholder? DONALD RUMSFELD, the present Secretary of Defence of the USA.	
	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.13			
Do you know that	the base of TAMIFLU	is	crushed aniseed?
	Carrier	Pr: relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.14			
Do you know	who	controls	90% of the world's production of this tree? ROCHE.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.15			
Do you know that	sales of TAMIFLU	were	over \$254 million in 2004 and more than \$1000 million in 2005?
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.16			
Do you know	how many more millions ROCHE	can earn	in the coming months
	Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance
Cl.17			
if	the business of fear	continues?	
	Actor	Pr: material	
Cl.18			
So the summary of the story	is	as follows:	
Carrier	Pr: relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.19			
Bush's friends	decide	that	
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon	
Cl.20			
the medicine TAMIFLU	is	the solution	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.21			
for a pandemic that	has not yet occurred		
Actor	Pr: Material		
Cl.22			
and that	has caused	a hundred deaths worldwide in 9 years.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.23			
This medicine	doesn't so much as cure	the common flu.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.24			
In normal conditions	the virus	does not affect	humans.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.25			
Rumsfeld	sells	the patent for	to ROCHE

		TAMIFLU	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Beneficiary
Cl.26			
for which	they	pay	him
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.27			
Roche	acquires		90% of the global production of crushed aniseed, the base for the antivirus.
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.28			
The governments of the entire world	threaten		a pandemic
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.29			
and then	buy		industrial quantities of the product from Roche.
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.30			
So	we	end up paying	for medicine
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.31			
while Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush	get		richer,
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.32			
thank	the RED STATES!		
Pr: Verbal	Receiver		

9A: Okay... I've HAD it... REALLY had it with Michelle Obama.

Cl.1			
Her pronouncement years ago of being proud for the first time in her adult life of her country	PALES		in comparison to
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.2			
what	she	said	during a 9-11 commemoration over the weekend.
Verbiage	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Circumstance
Cl.3			
This anti American socialist blathering FOOL	has gone		WAY too far.
Actor	Pr: Material		Goal
Cl.4			
There	she	sat	on Barack's right side
	Actor	Pr: Material	Circumstance
Cl.5			
as	bagpipers		played

		Actor	Pr: Material
Cl.6			
and	an honor guard	folded	an American Flag.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.7			
You	know		
Senser	Pr: Mental		
Cl.8			
how	it	's	done... with reverence and respect, folded precisely and crisply. . . honored.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.9			
It	was	during that moment	
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value	
Cl.10			
that	our nations "First Lady"	leaned	to her husband's ears
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.11			
and	asked	the question	
	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.12			
that	should set	your TEETH on fire! All of this for a damned flag?	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.13			
When	Barack	nodded,	
	Actor	Pr: Material	
Cl.14			
she	sat	back	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.15			
and	gave	a look of disgust.	
	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.16			
There is	no audio		
Pr: Existential	Existent		
Cl.17			
but	you	can clearly read	her lips
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.18			
(An expert lipreader	verified	this).	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.19			
HE	doesn't show	the least bit of surprise at her question!!	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	

9B: Fwd: News: Jon Bon Jovi's Death

Cl.1			
Rockstar Jon Bon Jovi (John Francis Bongiovi, Jr)	was	pronounced dead	today
carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance
Cl.2			
after	paramedics	found	him in a coma at his Empress Hotel,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.3			
city and law enforcement of Asbury Park, NJ sources	told	The Times	after World Christmas Tour concert on The Bamboozle Festival, North Beach Asbury Park.
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Circumstance
Cl.4			
New Jersey Fire Department-First Aid Captain Douglas Gray	told	The Times	that
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.5			
paramedics	responded	to a 911 call from the home.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.6			
When they arrived,	Bon Jovi	was	not breathing
Circumstance	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.7			
The paramedics	performed	CPR	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.8			
and	took	Bon Jovi	to Jersey Shore Medical Center,
	Pr: Material	Beneficiary	Goal
Cl.9			
Ruda	said.		
Sayer	Pr: Verbal		
Cl.10			
Hundreds of reporters	gathered	at the hospital awaiting word on his condition.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.11			
The sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity	, said		
Sayer	Pr: Verbal		

Cl.12			
Bon Jovi team	rushed	to Bon Jovi's bedside,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.13			
where	he	suffered	Cardiac arrest.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.14			
The detectives	plan to interview	relatives, friends and Bon Jovis's doctors to try to figure out what happened.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.15			
The N.J. County coroner's office	will determine	a cause of death.	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.16			
A New Jersey Fire Department source	told	The Times	that
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage
Cl.17			
Bon Jovi	was	in full cardiac arrest	when rescue units arrived.
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	Circumstance

10A: They pushed her down a sewer

Cl.1				
About 6 years ago in Indiana,	Carmen Winstead	was pushed down	a sewer opening	by 5 girls in her school,
Circumstance	Beneficiary	Pr: Material	Goal	Actor
Cl.2				
trying to embarrass	her	in front of her school during a fire drill.		
Pr: Material	Goal	Circumstance		
Cl.3				
When	she	didn't submerge		
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material		
Cl.4				
the police	were	called.		
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute		
Cl.5				
They	went	down		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.6				
and	brought up	17 year old Carmen Winstead's body,		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.7				

her neck	broke	hitting the ladder, then side concrete at the bottom.		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.8				
The girls	told	everyone		
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver		
Cl.9				
she	fell...			
Actor	Pr: Material			
Cl.10				
They	believed	them.		
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon		
Cl.11				
FACT: 2 months ago,	16 year old David Gregory	read	this post	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.12				
and	didn't repost	it.		
	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage		
Cl.13				
When	he	went to take	a shower	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.14				
he	heard	laughter	from his shower,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Range	
Cl.15				
he	started	freaking out		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.16				
and	ran	to his computer	to repost it,	
	Pr: Material	Range	Goal	
Cl.17				
He	said	goodnight	to his mom	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	Receiver	
Cl.18				
and	went to sleep,			
	Pr: Material			
Cl.19				
5 hours later	his mom	woke up	in the middle of the night cause of a loud noise,	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.20				
David	was	gone,		
Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute		
Cl.21				
that morning a few hours later	the police	found	him	in the sewer,
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Range
Cl.22				
his neck	[was]	broke		

Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute	
Cl.23			
and	his face skin	[was]	peeled off.
	Carrier	Pr: Relational Att.	Attribute
Cl.24			
If	you	don't repost	this
			saying "She was pushed" or "They pushed her down a sewer"
	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage
Cl.25			
Then	Carmen	will get	you, either from a sewer, the toilet, the shower,
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.26			
or when	you	go to sleep	
	Actor	Pr: Material	
Cl.27			
you	'll wake up	in the sewer, in the dark,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.28			
then	Carmen	will come and kill	you.
	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal

10B: Flunk me if you can

Cl.1			
My roommate in college	swore	this happened	in one of his engineering final exams:
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	Circumstance
Cl.2			
The class	is taking	their exams,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.3			
and	the time	runs out.	
	Actor	Pr: Material	
Cl.4			
The professor	dutifully states,	"Time's up. Turn your exams in."	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage	
Cl.5			
All of the students	turn	their exams in,	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.6			
except for one student		still diligently writing away.	
Actor		Pr: Material	
Cl.7			

The professor	tells	the student	to turn in his exam,	
Actor	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage	
Cl.8				
but	he	continues writing away,		
	Actor	Pr: Material		
Cl.9				
frantically trying to finish		his exam.		
Pr: Material		Goal		
Cl.10				
After a couple of minutes of this,	the student	proudly makes his way	to the front of the room	
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Cl.11				
and	turns in	his exam.		
	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.12				
The following	is supposed to be	the verbal exchange:		
Token	Pr: Relational Id.	Value		
Cl.13				
Professor: "I	won't take	that.		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.14				
You	continued	beyond the allotted time limit."		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.15				
Student:	"Do	you	know	who I am?"
		Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.16				
Professor: "I	don't care	who you are,		
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon		
Cl.17				
I	'm not taking	this."		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.18				
Student:	"Do	you	know	who I am?"
		Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.19				
Professor: "I	told	you,	I'm not taking this."	
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage	
Cl.20				
Student:	"Do	you	know	who I am?"
		Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Cl.21				
Professor: "I	don't care	if you're the Dean's son,		
Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon		
Cl.22				
you	're not turning	this exam in.		
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal		
Cl.23				
You	'll take	a zero on this exam!"		

Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.24		
Student:	"Do	you
	Senser	Pr: Mental
		know
		who I am?"
Cl.25		
Professor: "Okay, smartass.	I	don't know
	Senser	Pr: Mental
		who you are.
		Why?"
Cl.26		
At which point	the student	grabs
		the whole pile of finished exams on the professor's desk,
Circumstance	Actor	Pr: Material
		Goal
Cl.27		
throws	his	in with the pile,
Pr: Material	Goal	Range
Cl.28		
and	flings	the entire pile up in the air,
	Pr: Material	Goal
Cl.29		
where	they	naturally intermingle
	Actor	Pr: Material
Cl.30		
and	fall	all over the place
	Pr: Material	Range
Cl.31		
(thus	mixing	his up with the other exams).
	Pr: Material	Goal

APPENDIX III
NARRATIVE SECTIONS

Narrative sections	Urban Legend					
	1A	1B	2A	2B	3A	3B
abstract	Ladies, beware at the gas station [Subj]	Grandm a larceny [Subj]	Spiders under toilet seat [Subj]	This is a true story which happened on 9-11-01 [Subj]	Wash before wearing [Subj]	Neighbor s beware! [Subj]
orientation	A friend stopped at a pay-at-the-pump gas station to get gas	Family driving through remote part of the country	3 women in Chicago turned up at hospitals with the same symptoms.	James worked on the World Trade Center, he is blind and has a Golden retriever named Daisy	Woman came back from south America	A business traveler goes to a lounge for a drink; a person offers to buy them a drink
Complicating action	a guy slipped into the back seat of her car	Grandm a dies	Same happens with a person from Los Angeles	Plane hits building	She notices a rash on her left breast	The traveler wakes up in a hotel room bathtub having had kidneys harvested
evaluation	He could have kidnaped, killed and dismembered her	Family ties grandma 's body to luggage rack on top of vehicle	Investigation of restaurants and airplanes victims had been on	Daisy leads people out of the building through the	A series of doctors cannot diagnose her, and bandage her sores	Business traveler calls 911

				smoke		
result	Near-disaster	All family members leave vehicle at service station	Contamination by venomous spiders hiding under toilet seat	Daisy saved 967 lives	A dermatologist removes the bandages and they find larva growing in her breast	Paramedics are sent out to help
coda	Be careful! Pass this on	Car – and grandma’s corpse get stolen	It can save your life Pass this on	Daisy is rewarded a medal of honor	Larvae were feeding off the fat, tissue and milk cannals of her bossom.	Be careful

Narrative sections	Urban Legend					
	4A	4B	5A	5B	6A	6B
abstract	Urgent prayer request [Subj]	Boiled brains [Subj]	The necrophiliac’s gift [Subj]	Please check your chair when going to the movie theaters! !!! [Subj]	Remain Alert at All Times [Subj]	BE AWARE! READ THIS GIRLS! [Subj]
orientation	I just got of the phone with a sweet friend that is going through some major hard circumstances	Milagros Esteves was a fine girl, but not too bright. One day she got asked a date by one guy she really liked, so on the day of the date she wanted to look	<i>A friend of a friend met a man while out on the town one night.</i>	Victim went to sit in a movie seat and something was poking her.	Wanted to share something that happened today while shopping at Sam's club	In Katy, Tx a man came over and offered his services as a painter to a female putting gas in her car and left his card.

		pretty.				
Complicating action	Daughter killed yesterday at Virginia Tech	Never appeared to the date – found dead	<i>she ended up having sex with him</i>	She then got up and found that it was a needle with a little note at the end.	A mother was leaning over looking for meat in the meat dept. and turned around to find her 4 yr. old daughter was missing .	As the lady left the service station and saw the men following her out of the station at the same time. Almost immediately, she started to feel dizzy and could not catch her breath. She drove into the first driveway and began to honk her horn to ask for help.
evaluation	Emergency flight to Virginia	Police investigation of her death	<i>the woman fell ill.</i>	It said: “Welcome to the world of AIDS.”	I asked a man who worked at Sam's to announce it over the loud speaker that Katie was missing .	Apparently there was a substance on the card and could have seriously injured her. The drug is called 'BURUNDAN GA' and it is used by people who wish to incapacitate a victim in order to steal or take advantage of them.
result	In a hurry, father runs over younger child	She died of boiled brains when trying to dry her	<i>she was "infected with corpse-worms" (maggots)</i>	Doctors tested the needle and it was HIV	They found the little girl 5 min. later	The men drove away but the lady still felt pretty bad for several

		hair in the microwave oven		POSITIVE!	crunched in a bathroom stall, her head was half shaved, and she was dressed in her underwear with a bag of clothes, a razor, and wig sitting on the floor right besides her.	minutes after she could finally catch her breath
coda	I would appreciate your prayers for this family	Doctors diagnosed death by boiled brain.	<i>the stranger she had slept with was a pathologist in a local hospital. He had fornicated with a decomposing corpse earlier that same day.</i>	If you must go to the movies, PLEASE, PLEASE Check! One of the safest ways is NOT sticking your hands between the seats, but moving the seat up and down and really look! Most of us just plop	Please keep an eye out for your kids when going to these shopping places.	make sure you don't accept cards at any given time alone or from someone on the streets.

				down into the seats.		
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Narrative sections	Urban Legend					
	7A	7B	8A	8B	9A	9B
abstract	storeroom danger [Subj]	Ladies, caution with use of tampons [Subj]	The truth about OBAMA [Subj]	BIRD FLU - US PROPAGANDA! [Subj]	Okay. . . I've HAD it. . . REALLY had it with Michelle Obama. [Subj]	Jon Bon Jovi's Death [Subj]
orientation	A stock clerk was sent to clean up a storeroom at their Maui, Hawaii location.	A woman I work with started using the new Tampax Pearl 5 months ago and that's when she started getting yeast infections.	Click on the website and see that there is an unabashedly RACIST running for president.	'bird flu' was discovered in Vietnam 9 years ago and barely 100 people have died in the whole world in all that time	what she said during a 9-11 commemoration over the weekend.	Rockstar Jon Bon Jovi (John Francis Bongiovi, Jr) was pronounced dead today after paramedics found him in a coma at his Empress Hotel
Complicating action	He died	As it got worse, she finally went to her OB-Gyn who was unsure how to treat her	Barack Obama is a member of this church and is running for President of the U.S.	ROCHE LABORATORIES and GILEAD SCIENCES INC. market TAMIFLU as a cure for a pandemic that does not exist	There she sat on Barack's right side as bagpipers played and an honor guard folded an American Flag. You know how it's done... with	paramedics responded to a 911 call from the home. When they arrived, Bon Jovi was not breathing.

					reverence and respect, folded precisely and crisply. . . honored.	
evaluation	it is extremely important to ALWAYS S carefully rinse off the tops of any canned sodas or foods, and wipe off pasta packaging, cereal boxes, etc.	She had figured out what it was herself and the doctor confirmed it. It was the Tampax Pearl fibers. They had been collecting for the past 5 months!	Strip away his nice looks, the big smile and smooth talk and what do you get? Certainly a racist, as plainly defined by the stated position of his church! And possibly a covert worshiper of the Muslim faith	Bush, Rumsfeld and Cheney (Two government representatives and a friend draw profit from such companies	This anti American socialist blathering FOOL has gone WAY too far.	Hundreds of reporters gathered at the hospital awaiting word on his condition.
result	A brief investigation by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta discovered the cause. The top was encrusted with dried rat's urine which is	The fibers from the tampon are cutting her and making her bleed.	This guy desires to rule over America while his loyalty is totally vested in a Black Africa!	So we end up paying for medicine while Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush get richer,	She asked: All of this for a damned flag?	Bon Jovi team rushed to Bon Jovi's bedside, where he suffered Cardiac arrest.

	toxic and obviously lethal!!					
coda	Please forward this message to the people you care about.	She told me and every woman she knows in order to get the word out, so no one else has to go through this. I said I'd spread the word. I know a yeast infection is an awful thing to experience, but this is so much worse!	I cannot believe this has not been all over the TV and newspapers. This is why it is so important to pass this message along to all of our family & friends.	thank the RED STATES!	HE (Barack Obama) doesn't show the least bit of surprise at her question!!	Bon Jovi was in full cardiac arrest when rescue units arrived.

Narrative sections	Urban Legend					
	10A	10B				
abstract	They pushed her down a sewer [Subj]	Flunk me if you can [Subj]				
orientation	About 6 years ago in Indiana, Carmen Winstead was pushed down a sewer opening by 5 girls in her school, trying to	My roommate in college swore this happened in one of his engineering final exams:				

	embarrass her in front of her school during a fire drill.					
Complicating action	When she didn't submerge the police were called.	The class is taking their exams, and the time runs out. The professor dutifully states, "Time's up. Turn your exams in." All of the students turn their exams in, except for one student still diligently writing away.				
evaluation	They went down and brought up 17 year old Carmen Winstead's body, her neck broke hitting the ladder, then side concrete at the bottom.	Professor does not know who the student is				
result	The girls told everyone she fell... They believed them.	At which point the student grabs the whole pile of finished exams on the professor's desk, throws his in with the pile, and flings the entire pile up in the air, where they naturally intermingle and fall all over the place				
coda	If you don't repost this	(thus mixing his up with the				

	saying "She was pushed" or "They pushed her down a sewer" Then Carmen will get you, either from a sewer, the toilet, the shower, or when you go to sleep you'll wake up in the sewer, in the dark, then Carmen will come and kill you.	other exams).				
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APPENDIX IV

VARIATIONS OF CARMEN'S STORY IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

European Portuguese Version

Fwd: [untitled]

Carmen era um rapariga de 17 anos quando os pais decidiram mudar-se para Indiana. O seu pai tinha perdido o trabalho por isso a única maneira de arranjar um novo emprego era mudarem para um novo estado. A mudança causou muitos problemas a Carmen. Ela tinha que deixar os seus amigos para trás e ir para uma nova escola em Indiana.

Carmen teve problemas em fazer amigos quando mudou de escola. Era o meio do ano e ninguém parecia interessado em fazer amizade com a nova aluna. Inicialmente ela passou muitos dias sozinha, andando de sala para sala sem falar com ninguém, mas eventualmente começou a andar com um grupo de 5 raparigas. Carmen pensou que estas raparigas eram suas amigas, mas não durou muito até descobrir que elas andavam a falar dela nas suas costas e a espalhar rumor horríveis.

Quando Carmen as confrontou, elas viraram-se contra elas e passaram a praticar bullying sobre ela todos os dias, fazendo a sua vida miserável. Começaram por chamar-lhe nomes, mas depois o bullying tornou-se muito pior. Um dia, ela deixou os livros na sala de aula e quando voltou para vir busca-los viu que alguém tinha escrito montes de palavras porcas neles. Outro dia, ela abriu a sua mochila e viu que alguém tinha posto iogurte lá dentro. Às vezes ela vinha para a escola descobrindo que o seu cacifo tinha sido vandalizado. A última gota, foi quando ela pôs o casaco e descobriu que tinham posto fezes de cão nos seus bolsos.

Então Carmen fartou-se de ser vítima deste tipo de tratamento por isso decidiu ,previamente, ficar mais tarde na escola essa tarde e contar à professora o que tinha andado a acontecer. Mas não foi a tempo para se salvar. Nesse dia a professora anunciou à hora do almoço que haveria uma simulação de incêndio.

Quando todos os alunos se encontravam no pátio da escola, à espera que os professores fizessem a chamada, as cinco raparigas viram Carmen sozinha à beira de um buraco de esgoto e aproveitaram esse momento para implicarem com ela. Começaram a puxar-lhe as roupas, a bater-lhe, até ao ponto que a empurraram e esta caiu de cabeça no poço. Ao vê-la cair elas riram, e quando chamaram o nome de Carmen, estas disseram rindo, “ Caiu ao poço.” Todos os alunos se riram, mas quando os professores se acercaram do poço todos os risos cessaram. Carmen encontrava-se deitada no chão sujo do poço, o seu pescoço estava torcido num angulo anormal e a sua cara despedaçada irreconhecível. Os bombeiros puxaram o corpo de Carmen, informando que já não havia nada que pudessem fazer pela menina, esta estava morta.

Todos os alunos foram retidos na escola nesse dia depois das aulas, para a polícia questionar cada um. As cinco raparigas, mentiram dizendo que ela tinha caído sozinha ao poço e que elas tinham testemunhado o acidente. Todos pensaram que seria a última vez que ouviriam falar de Carmen. Mas enganavam-se. Um mês após o acidente os alunos daquela escola começaram a receber e-mails dizendo. “ Elas empurraram-na.” Que dizia que alguém tinha empurrado

Carmen e que se não se acusassem haveria terríveis consequências. Muitos alunos apagaram-no, ignorando completamente, achando que era uma brincadeira de mau gosto, enquanto outros não.

Uns dias mais tarde, uma das raparigas que empurrara Carmen estava a tomar banho quando ouviu um estranho riso. Assustada, saiu da casa de banho a correr. Nessa noite, a sua mãe despediu-se dela e cinco horas mais tarde ouviu um barulho horrível, correu para o quarto da filha para encontra-lo vazio. Telefonou à polícia e esta conduziu buscas ao local e arredores, onde eventualmente encontraram a rapariga. O seu cadáver estava deitado num esgoto sujo, o seu pescoço estava torcido num anglo anormal e a sua cara despedaçada, irreconhecível.

Uma por uma, todas as raparigas que empurraram Carmen foram desaparecendo, mais tarde sendo encontradas num poço, com o pescoço torcido num anglo normal e a sua cara despedaçada, irreconhecível, tal como Carmen. Mas as mortes não acabaram aí, todos os antigos colegas de Carmen que não acreditaram que Carmen tinha sido empurrada, foram encontrados mortos, mortos da mesma maneira que Carmen.

Segundo a lenda, o fantasma de Carmen ainda anda por aí matando todos os que não acreditam na sua história. Se não acreditares, ela vai apanhar-te, vais te deitar e na manhã seguinte acordas no esgoto, paralisado, sem te poderes mexer de maneira alguma, ouvindo risos à tua volta, e quando gritas em pânico, a Carmen virá para arrancar a tua cara.

French Version

Fwd: Rip Carmen (Elles lui ont fait du mal)

Après le déjeuner, son professeur a annoncé que l'école allait faire un exercice d'incendie. Lorsque l'alarme retentit, Carmen et les autres étudiants sortirent de la salle de classe et ce rassemblèrent dans la cour extérieure. Comme les enseignants lièrent l'appel nominal, la gang de cinq jeunes filles ont décidé que ce fut une excellente occasion d'embarrasser Carmen devant toute l'école. Elles se sont déplacées vers l'endroit où Carmen se tenait, près d'un drain d'égout, et ont commencées à humilier la pauvre fille, lui criant des insultes et la poussant vers le trou d'égout ouvert.

Elles l'ont poussé et elle a trébuché et tomba la tête la première vers le bas du trou d'égout. Quand elles ont vu sa chute, les filles ont commencé rire et quand le nom de Carmen a été appelé, elles ont crié "Elle est dans l'égout!"

Tous les autres étudiants se mirent à rire. Mais quand les enseignants méprisants du regard virent le corps de Carmen qui gisait au fond de la boue et la merde, le rire cessa brusquement. Sa tête était tordue d'un angle bizarre, et son visage était couvert de sang. Pire encore, elle ne bougeait pas. Il n'y avait rien que les enseignants pouvaient faire pour elle. Carmen était morte. Quand la police arriva et descendit dans les égouts, ils ont déterminé qu'elle c'était cassé le cou. Son visage avait été arraché quand elle avait frappé l'échelle et son cou cassé quand elle avait atterri sur la tête au fond.

La police transporta le corps de Carmen à la morgue. Tout le monde devait rester à l'école tandis que la police interrogeait tous les camarades de classe de Carmen. Les cinq filles ont menti à la police, disant qu'elles avaient été témoins que Carmen était tombée dans les égouts. La police croit les filles et la mort de Carmen Winstead a été classée comme accident et l'affaire était close. Tout le monde pensait que c'était la dernière fois qu'ils allaient entendre parler de Carmen Winstead, mais ils avaient tort.

Quelques mois plus tard, ses camarades de classe ont commencé à recevoir des e-mails étranges. Les e-mails étaient intitulés «Ils l'ont poussée» et affirmaient que Carmen n'était pas vraiment tombé dans les égouts, mais qu'elle avait été poussée. Les e-mails ont également averti que les personnes coupables devaient prendre la responsabilité de leur crime. S'ils ne le faisaient pas qu'il y aurait des conséquences horribles. La plupart des gens ont rejetés les e-mails comme un canular, mais d'autres n'en étaient pas si sûrs.

Quelques jours plus tard, l'une des filles qui ont poussé Carmen dans les égouts a été à la maison prendre une douche, quand elle entendit un rire étrange, caquetant. Il semblait venir de la fuite. La fille a commencé à paniquer et couru hors de la salle de bain. Cette nuit-là, la fille dit bonne nuit à sa mère et alla dormir. Cinq heures plus tard, sa maman fut réveillée au milieu de la nuit, par un grand bruit qui résonna dans toute la maison. Elle courut dans la chambre de sa fille pour y trouver le vide. Il n'y avait aucune trace de la jeune fille. La mère inquiète appela la police et quand ils sont arrivés, ils ont mené une recherche de la région. Finalement, ils ont découvert les restes macabres de la fille.

Son cadavre était couché dans l'égout, couvert de boue et de merde. Son cou était brisé et le visage manquant. Il avait été complètement arraché. Un par un, toutes les filles qui ont poussé Carmen ce jour-là ont été retrouvés mortes. Elles avaient toutes été tués, exactement de la même façon et ont toutes été retrouvés exactement au même endroit. Dans l'égout où Carmen avait rencontré son destin. Mais le meurtre ne s'arrête pas là. De plus en plus d'anciens camarades de classe de Carmen ont été retrouvés morts. Il semblait que tous ceux qui ne croyaient pas que Carmen avait été poussée, ont finalement été retrouvés dans les égouts avec leurs cous brisés et leurs visages arrachés.

Ils disent que le fantôme de Carmen est toujours sur le saccage, à traquer tous ceux qui ne croient pas son histoire. Selon la légende, qu'il s'agisse d'une toilette, d'une douche, d'un évier ou d'un drain, lorsque vous allez dormir, vous vous réveillerez dans l'égout, dans l'obscurité totale, paralysé, incapable de bouger, à entendre caqueter, rires tout autour de vous. Puis, comme tu cries dans l'horreur, Carmen viendra te déchirera le visage.

Donc soyez prudent vous qui intimidez, car vous pourriez simplement vous retrouver sur l'extrémité de réception de la malédiction de Carmen Winstead.

FAIT: Environ deux mois plus tard, 16 ans, David Gregory lus cet article et ne le re-posta pas. Quand il est allé prendre une douche, il entendit des rires, a commencé à paniquer et courut à son ordinateur pour le re-post. Il a dit bonne nuit à sa mère et est allé dormir, mais cinq heures plus tard, sa mère se réveilla au milieu de la nuit à cause d'un bruit fort et David avait disparu. Quelques heures plus tard, la police l'a trouvé dans les égouts, avec une fracture du cou et de la peau de son visage décollée.

Même sur Google tapez son nom vous trouverez que c'est vrai.

Si vous ne renvoyez ce bulletin en disant "Elles lui ont fait du mal" Carmen va vous trouver..

Spanish Version

Facebook Post

Después del almuerzo, la maestra anunció que la escuela fue la celebración de un simulacro de incendio. Cuando sonó la alarma, Carmen y los demás alumnos salieron del aula y se reunieron en el patio exterior. Como los maestros leer el pase de lista, el grupo de cinco chicas decidieron que esto era una gran oportunidad para avergonzar a Carmen al frente de toda la escuela durante el simulacro de incendio. Se mudaron a donde Carmen estaba de pie, cerca de una alcantarilla, y comenzó a agolparse la poorgirl, recibiendo en su cara y empujando hacia la alcantarilla abierta.

Le empujó y se tropezó y cayó de cabeza por la escotilla. Cuando la vieron caer, las chicas comenzaron risas y cuando el nombre de Carmen fue llamado, comenzaron a gritar "Ella está en la alcantarilla!"

Todos los otros estudiantes se echó a reír. Pero cuando los maestros miró hacia el agujero y vio el cuerpo de Carmen está mintiendo en la parte inferior de la suciedad y el excremento, la risa se detuvo abruptamente. Su cabeza se giró en un ángulo extraño y su cara estaba cubierta de sangre. Peor aún, ella no se movía. No había nada de ninguno de los profesores pudieran hacer por ella. Carmen había muerto. Cuando la policía llegó y bajó a la alcantarilla, se determinó que se había roto el cuello. Su rostro había sido arrancado cuando ella golpeó la escalera en el camino hacia abajo y rompió el cuello cuando aterrizó en la cabeza en el cemento en la parte inferior.

La policía arrastrado el cuerpo de Carmen de la alcantarilla y la envió a la morgue. Todo el mundo tuvo que quedarse después de la escuela, mientras que la policía interrogó a todos los compañeros de clase de Carmen. Los cinco girlslied a la policía, diciendo que había sido testigo de Carmen caer por la alcantarilla. La policía cree que las niñas y la muerte de Carmen Winstead fue descartado un accidente y el caso fue cerrado. Todo el mundo pensaba que era el último que quería oír hablar de Carmen Winstead, pero estaban equivocados.

Meses más tarde, compañeros de clase de Carmen comenzó a recibir extraños correos electrónicos en su MySpaces. Los correos electrónicos se titula "la empujaron" y afirmó que Carmen no había caído realmente mal la red de alcantarillado, que había sido empujado. Los e-mails también advirtió que los culpables deben poseer y asumir la responsabilidad por su crimen. Si no habría consecuencias horribles. La mayoría de los despedidos los e-mails como un engaño, pero otros no estaban tan seguros.

A los pocos días, una de las chicas que empujó a Carmen por la alcantarilla estaba en casa tomando una ducha, cuando oyó una risa extraña cacareo. Parecía venir de la fuga. La niña

empezó a enloquecer y salió corriendo del cuarto de baño. Esa noche, la chica se despidió de su madre y se fue a dormir. Cinco horas después, su madre se despertó en medio de la noche, por un loudnoise que resonó en toda la casa. Ella corrió a la habitación de su hija, sólo para descubrir que estaba vacío. No había rastro de la muchacha. La madre preocupada llamó a la policía y cuando llegaron, se realizó una búsqueda de la zona. Finalmente, se descubrieron restos horribles de la niña.

Su cadáver fue tirado en la alcantarilla, cubierto de lodo y excremento. Tenía el cuello roto y perdido la cara. Que había sido completamente arrancado. Una por una, todas las chicas que empujó a Carmen que día fueron encontrados muertos. Todos habían sido asesinados en la misma forma y se encontraron todos en el mismo sitio. En la red de alcantarillado en la parte inferior de la boca de inspección mismo descubrió que Carmen había conocido a su destino. Pero la muerte no se detuvo allí. Más y más de antiguos compañeros de clase de Carmen fueron encontrados muertos. Parecía que todo el que no creía que Carmen había sido empujada, fue finalmente encontrado en la red de alcantarillado, con el cuello roto y la cara arrancada.

Dicen que el fantasma de Carmen sigue siendo en el alboroto, la caza de cualquier persona que no Historia de la mujer creen. Según la leyenda, Carmen le dará, whetherit es de un inodoro, una ducha, un lavabo o un desagüe. Cuando usted va a dormir, te despertarás en la red de alcantarillado, en completa oscuridad, paralizado, incapaz de moverse, oír cacarear risas a su alrededor. Entonces, como usted grito de horror, Carmen llegará y rasgar su rostro apagado.

Así que ten cuidado que te intimidan, porque puede ser que apenas se encuentra en el extremo receptor de la maldición del Carmen Winstead.

DATO: Unos dos meses después, el 16 - años de edad, David Gregory leer esto y no lo publique de nuevo. Cuando fue a tomar una ducha, oyó la risa, comenzó volviendo loco, y corrió a su ordenador para volver a publicar. Se despidió de su madre y se fue a dormir, pero cinco horas más tarde, su madre se despertó en medio de la noche a partir de un fuerte ruido y David se había ido. Unas horas más tarde, la policía lo encontró en la red de alcantarillado, con el cuello roto y la piel en su cara pelada.

Incluso Google su nombre - usted encontrará que esto es cierto.

Si no se publique de nuevo este diciendo: "Le duele", entonces Carmen le dará, ya sea de una alcantarilla, el inodoro, la ducha, o cuando se va a dormir, te despertarás en la alcantarilla, en la oscuridad , a continuación, Carmen vendrá y te matará.