Gustavo Assumpcao

COM 324

10/31/2023

**Paper 2**

If someone asked me to talk about my identity, I would definitely start talking about being from Brazil. Because it is the central fact of my identity: Brazilian. Thinking about the time that I have already spent here at Hanover, this part of my identity helped me build what I call my "second home". Reminiscing the last few years on campus, the language and symbol usage have had a huge impact on my identity at Hanover. I am the guy that everyone knows and vice versa, and do not get me wrong, I know all the names, but I still call everyone the same two things: "Friends" or "Brotha". Sometimes I catch myself thinking something like "How did I meet all of these people being from Brazil?", and then I read something in our book that says that the term "difference" describes the stage of being unique, different, or in some other sense dissimilar. It indicates differences, contrasts, or discrepancies among people and ideas, emphasizing the distinctiveness or divergence that makes them stand out from one another.

Symbolic interaction is a common term used to describe Mead's theory (1934). In essence, he clarified how language shapes social collectivities and individual identities. We discover our identity and the culture in which we live by the symbolic interactions we have with others. The language and symbol usage that I have been using at Hanover really helped build my identity on campus. Also, the language use was pretty helpful when it came to getting closer to different people because I have different ways to refer to my friends based on how close we are. For Burke, when we use symbols, we identify a person in such a way as to distinguish it from something else. We go on a personal journey in this essay, removing the layers that make up my identity and investigating the defining moment and its influences, and reflections that have molded the person I am today. I try to disclose my identity as a canvas, paint my colors on it, and ultimately capture my essence, much like an artist reveals their masterpiece, brushstroke by brushstroke.

I can certainly say that almost every little moment on this campus can be considered a defining moment, just because this place is magical. However, since I had to settle for only one moment, I decided to talk about an opportunity that I had during the Fall 22 semester. Started my junior year with a weird feeling, since most of my friends graduated the year before, and my best friend decided to study abroad so I was kind of by myself. Even though I had the weird feeling, it never stopped me from moving on with my life and meeting new people. However, since most of the people that I knew were not here, I started to think about studying abroad for a semester in Spain, which would help me a lot with my Spanish major. I can say that I devoted most of my free time during the Fall of 22 to filling out applications, talking to my advisors, writing essays, and a lot more, just to go to Spain. At one point, I was ready to go, I was just missing my ticket.

However, if I had to be honest, I was never ready to spend a whole semester in Spain, and it is not because I was scared of living in a different country, but because I was scared of not being on campus around my friends and just missing out on the magical place that only brings me joy, and that I can call "Home". At the same time that I was working on the process of applying to study abroad, I met new people on different occasions that had a huge impact on how I see the world and how I want to live my life. I turned down my opportunity to study in Spain because of the strong relationships that I found at Hanover and how they make me feel whenever I am around them.

My friends and I, most of the time, do not refer to each other by our first name, we use "friend" or "brotha". I can say that most of the people on campus refer to me as "friend", because I started calling my friends "friends" whenever I was having a hard time deciding whether I wanted to go to Spain or not, and I wanted to see how my friends would support me. "Brotha", I feel that is a nice way to show some intimacy between people, it helps me show that I consider a certain person as my brother. The expression "Chilling & Thriving" is like my slogan on campus, and I can say that this is the best language usage in my identity, because everyone knows me for that, and I had to get that tattooed on me. This expression helped me a lot whenever I was stressing about deadlines for the program.

Mead says that a significant other is a person who has a lot of influence on us and can provide us with honest criticism about ourselves. We may consider our parents, siblings, close friends, and romantic partners to be significant others. Their positive emotions develop a strong sense of self-worth in us. I can say that my "friends" and "brothas" had a huge impact on me during the Fall of 22. Because they never told me to not do it, but the opposite, they supported me because they only wanted to see me happy. That's why this language usage is essential in my daily life because it's not everyone that I can consider a "friend" or a "brotha".

Burke argued that naming is a "magical" act that just approximates the connection between the thing being named and its actual meaning. I can call this campus "home", because every time I leave, I cannot wait to be back, even if I go back to Brazil, I am always looking forward to being back at Hanover because this place is magical. According to Burke (1966), symbols serve as "screens" that keep us apart from the nonverbal world. Burke (1973) clarified that as a result, the things we name carry "attitudes" toward us. These attitudes imply how we feel about the object and how we think other people should feel about it. Burke stated that "dancing of an attitude" is what rhetoric is. It is because of how I feel about this place that I can call it "home" and I can say that I do not regret that much not studying abroad, because I got to spend more time on campus with my "friends" and "brothas".

I can say that during the Fall 22 semester, I had a lot of good moments with my people that I will never forget. If we had to tell our stories from that semester to someone we would be "chilling & thriving" the whole time, because that is how I was whenever I was hanging out with my "friends" and "brothas". According to Bormann (1985), people essentially construct and exchange stories, or imaginations, when they interact in small groups in order to meet needs. Here, the term "fantasy" is not used in the traditional meaning. This idea holds that fantasies are actual things that happen to individuals and groups. Fantasy is essentially described as an experience that individuals share. I can say that I have had a lot of fantasies throughout my defining moments, that would make everyone understand why I decided to not study abroad.

Now, if someone asks me to talk about my identity, I will keep mentioning that I am from Brazil, but now I will always say that I am a Hanoverian. Because this place is "home", and it has been the most unreal experience of my life, and within all the opportunities that I had throughout my time here I can only appreciate how language can make all of this work. I found real "friends" and "brothas" who have my back at any point and are always there to support me in my decisions. Even when I turned down my scholarship to go to Spain, they kept supporting me because of my decision without judgment. After talking about how influential the language symbols were for me, we can infer that language and symbol usage, with an ability to produce distinction, regularly and significantly influence rhetoric. The interplay of language, symbols, and rhetoric is fundamental to the power of persuasive communication, its influence on identity and group dynamics, and its potential for both positive and negative results. The last language symbol that I want to mention is "gratidão", it means gratitude, and this is how I feel every day here in a magical place. Looking forward to making more defining moments during my senior year.