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“Esto yo lo dejo ahí, extiéndalo usted más allá” [1] Poetic work by Wilson Caicedo and the historical memory of Village 8 in Buenaventura

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Abstract

Introduction: The paper deals with the historical memory of the Afro-descendant community of Village 8 in Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca, Colombia) based on the poems by Wilson Caicedo, one member of this community. **Methodology:** The poems were analyzed from the viewpoint of semiotics of culture based on the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes. The other testimonies were used to create a timeline and a semantic network. **Results:** The poems present an original synthesis of victimizing facts, experiences, exhortations, and symbolic elaborations that were not reported in the analyzed testimonies. **Discussion and conclusions:** The poetic work by Wilson Caicedo creates a narrative

about the avatars in Village 8, and thus its analysis contributes to widen the comprehension horizon of the upheavals suffered by the community as well as its resistance processes. Moreover, the performative character of the poetries strengthens the community bonds, which is also represented in the poems but at the same time is challenged to produce new meanings, narratives, and practices of resistance.

Keywords

Poetry; memory; semiotics of culture; Afro-descendants; Colombian Pacific.

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1. Introduction

The results of research carried out in Village 8 in Buenaventura (Colombian Pacific coast) are presented, in which special attention is paid to the poetic work by Wilson Caicedo. The study focused on two main objectives. First, to reconstruct the events and experiences defining the recent past and the present situation of the Village. Second, to examine, via a socio-semiotic analysis, how Caicedo's poetry widen the understanding horizon of the community's recent history and thus contribute to the shaping of its historical memory and future perspectives.

Such research is justified by three main reasons. First, because the black community of the Village is in serious economic and cultural vulnerability caused, among other factors, by State abandonment, forced displacement, massacres, and glyphosate aerial spraying of their crops. Thus, it is crucial and urgent to address the efforts to reconstruct the events that have impacted the community's life and contribute academically to their demand for justice. Second, because, as suggested by other similar studies, poetry considered as an element shaping the historical memory involves valuable analytical possibilities, and thus Caicedo's work constitutes a great research document. Third, because the field of social communication is significantly enriched if poetry is considered a telling social text that unites, combines, and creates meanings about experiences, narratives, and relations of many communities.

The reviewed literature shows that the social study of black, Raizal, Palenquero, and Afro-Colombian communities [2] started in the middle of the 20th century. For Velandia and Restrepo (2017), the first attempts of analysis had a clear functionalist influence due to the "Afro-Americanist" movement founded by American anthropologist Melville Herskovits. In this research area, the works by Arboleda (1950) and Escalante (1954) stand out as they contributed to the descriptive and explanatory study of the history and folklore of Afro-American communities.

In the beginning of the 70s a new interpretive turn is observed [3], which intends to understand the black culture in Colombia. Within this current, it was common to use photographic and documentary techniques to record up to that moment unprecedented facts (Whitten and Friedemann, 1974; Friedemann and Patiño 1983; Friedemann and Vanín, 1995). In that way, a new generation of studies with strong academic and sociopolitical influence begins. The growing popularity of this type of

research contributed to unveil historical forms of segregation and discrimination suffered by the Afro-Colombian communities (Zapata, 1989), which, in many cases, were closely linked to national violent dynamics (Restrepo, 2001).

Later, some researchers realized that the rich oral and literary tradition of the Afro-Colombian communities, among which *alabaos* (praise), *arrullos* (lullabies), *coplas* (couplets), chanted stories, and *romances* stand out, provided a novel and original access to different phenomena of ethnographic interest (Friedemann and Niño, 1997; Friedemann, 1997). This built the basis for studies focusing on cultural practices, worldviews, stories, resistances, and symbolic repertoires, in which the musical and literary characterization integrated a sociocultural explanation (Ochoa, Convers, and Hernández, 2015; Freja, 2012; Tobón, 2016; Oslender, 2003, 2005; Pinilla, 2017). Thus, a multidisciplinary approach began, where not only anthropology but also the methods and findings in historiography, sociology, linguistics, and literature became relevant (Quintero, 2012; Mosquera, 2000; Urrego, 2014; Arango, 2014, Ortíz, 2007, Schwegler, Kirschen y Maglia, 2017; Valderrama, 2017).

As to research done on Afro-Colombian oral and narrative traditions, such topics as birth, death, celebration and cleansing rituals, teaching, violence, survival, and struggle for reparation stand out. These topics are particularly important in the community processes of cultural transmission, resistance, and memory construction. Likewise, it is also explained how Afro-Colombian oral traditions have influenced other literary expressions that, besides reinventing and/or revealing orality, are part of compositions by multiple male and female authors who have managed to capture elements of their tradition in novels, stories, and verses.

As regards specifically Afro-Colombian poetry [4], there is now a decisive editorial [5] and academic effort to study and disseminate the work by well-known authors [6] as well as less renowned poets to acknowledge their place in the national literature. In academia, research by Lawo-Sukam (2007a; 2010; 2011b; 2012) stands out, in which the works of poets such as Hugo Salazar, Alfredo Vanín, Helcías Mantán, and Guillermo Payán are discussed highlighting their aesthetic and sociocultural values based on a reconstruction of each writer's individual and collective context. Their research also provides effective tools for the "sociocultural study of the Afro-Hispanic" (Lawo-Sukam, 2007b), for, based on a model such as *eco-criticism*, it is possible to reflect strictly on the cultural construction of the Afro-Colombian and its direct relationship with nature and the environment.

Other significant advances can also be found in texts by Escobar (2012), Jaramillo (2007), Oslender (2007a; 2007b), Martán and Hurtado (2008), N'gom (2015), Osorio (2001), and Porras (2011), who deal with the work by Candelario Obeso, Arnoldo Palacios, Mary Grueso, and Manuel Zapata, among others. Finally, in the texts by Quinceno, Ochoa and Villamizar (2016), Oslender (2003; 2005), Pinilla (2017), and Valderrama (2017), it is evident the value of poetry in the study of the black communities, whose memory and identity is conveyed and renewed via the texts and narratives that have functioned as documents for demand, resistance, and political participation in contexts of historical oppression and violence.

In sum, it could be stated that poetics (including oral literature) is emerging as a particularly useful resource to do sociocultural research in black communities. However, it should be remembered that the analytical models designed for that purpose are reviewed and adjusted continuously. This, instead of being a problem, opens an area of methodological possibilities that should always strive for a

balance between the ethnographic interest and the poetic-literary factors. Due to its intrinsic potential, poetry should not to have a residual status, but instead the opposite.

2. Methodology

2.1. Cartographies and semi-structured interviews

The research had a strong multidisciplinary approach and was organized in two phases. In the first phase, there was work with the community from an ethnographic perspective, oriented toward reconstructing, via testimonies, the recent history and the present situation of the community. For that purpose, glyphosate aerial spraying was considered together with its relationship with the *chontaduro* crisis, issues whose relevance was pointed out by the community itself.

Village 8 is formed by villages like Potedo, San Marcos, Limones, Aguas claras, Zacarías, Guaimía, Sabaletas, and Llano bajo. To achieve cultural representativity (Bonilla y Rodríguez, 1995) of the community, we resorted to San Marcos Community Council, whose members are recognized by the other villages. With them playing the role of doormen (Barbour, 2013), the work to be done was planned and participants were chosen according to age, gender, village, and occupation.

Even though some members of the community had been interviewed previously (Buitrago, Yate, Cundumí and Yaya, 2018), as the first form of contact, the proper fieldwork began with group meetings where body and territory cartographies were carried out. Body maps were used for participants to establish symbolic relations between their individuality and some significant events or situations. In line with Silva, Barrientos and Espinoza (2013), it was expected to promote geography of experience incarnated in the body where self-analysis and graphic representation would function as a repertoire for group dialogue and discussions.

By means of the territory cartographies, it was intended to look into the ways how the physical environment of the community was endowed with symbolic strength based on collective experiences. Unlike the cartography of the body, the territory cartography was a group work from the beginning where participants were organized according to the districts they came from. The exercise implied dialogue and a subsequent presentation of the place where participants lived, their relationship with that place and a reflection on the territory and identity problems of the Village. In this sense, the suggestion by Habegger, Mancilla, and Serrano (2006) was followed.

After analyzing the records obtained in the group meetings, a semi-structured interview model was developed for the second phase of the work with the community. The survey dealt with such issues as the interviewees' place of origin, memories about their life in the village before, during, and after glyphosate aerial spraying, their relationship with the *chontaduro* palm, other significant events for them and their community and, finally, the future perspectives.

The geographical distances and the difficulties to access the village were a crucial factor in developing the plan initially devised. As to the cartographies, there were intense sessions where the meaning and method of the exercise were explained, there was a follow-up for their development, and discussion about the graphic representations was promoted. All the process was audio-recorded and videotaped. Notes were also taken in field diaries. A total of six territory cartographies and thirty body maps were gathered, and three-hours group discussions were recorded.

The interviews were carried out at the participants' homes with the help of members of the San Marcos Communitarian Council. They suggested who should be interviewed and the visits' itinerary. A total of twelve interviews were done each one with an average of 35 minutes.

The materials and records obtained were organized for the analysis according to the itinerary of visits to the Village. The maps were digitalized and the group discussions and interviews were fully transcribed. With these inputs, a hermeneutic unit was created whose contents were codified and interlinked via semantic networks. For that purpose, the software Atlas.ti version 7.0 was used.

2.2. Poems' analysis from the viewpoint of semiotics of culture

The second phase of the research corresponded to the analysis of the poetic work by Caicedo. For this purpose, semiotics of culture theories, especially those developed by Yuri Lotman, together with the Tartu [7] school, were used. From this perspective, the literary work was studied as a creation of artistic matter inseparable from its sociocultural relationship. Even though semiotics has studied literature [8] for its semiological fact (Yllera, 1979; Mukarovsky, 1988) and has established some exogenous and intertextual relations with culture, it is Lotman (2011) who has studied especially the relations between extra-textual-cultural elements and the artistic text. Perhaps he is the most outstanding author in the analysis of culture based on semiotics (Jiménez, 2015).

The ethnic, oral, and Afro-descendant literature have been considered from different research approaches, particularly from the interdisciplinary study of literature and anthropology whose perspectives and interests are very diverse. 9] Many of these views address more closely the anthropological aspects of literature than the literary-artistic elements, like in the case of ethno-semiotics (Maestro, 1988). Even their concept of text shares more a classical vision (written texts) as subject-matter than a wider concept of text that can include another type of non-written phenomena (Leone, 2010).

Lotman, based on a crucial change in semiotics of culture concerning several ideas of traditional semiotics, conceives the text (sign system) not as a message originating from only one language but as a complex device of different codes that can transform messages “a generator of information with the traits of an intelligent person” (1988, p. 57). Thus, Lotman (2011) reveals how the artistic text, even though it should be understood from the view of culture, cannot be separated from its formal and literary aspects, nor its analysis.

When constructing the artistic text as a secondary language [10], a selection and conjunction of elements in a new semantics are made. These elements can be taken from different codes, values, and sign systems that are different from a natural language. When integrated into a text, these elements are leveled, that is to say, they become equivalent to achieve the construction of new meanings from the external recoding. Thus, the inequivalent elements in a natural language become equivalent in the artistic text and those equivalent in the natural language become inequivalent in the artistic text (Lotman, 1977). This shows how the literary work is composed of cultural codes (selection, conjunction, and equivalence) that form a new semantics, i.e. the structure of the literary work as a system.

The previous theoretical premises are employed to analyze Caicedo's poetic work as they locate the poetic text in an inseparable relationship with the *continuum* of its original culture. Even though other disciplines have studied the literary work exclusively focusing on its ethnographic, social, or cultural aspects (even linguistically), with Lotman an analysis path could be established, which discusses the literary aspects concerning the sociocultural and extratextual elements. To establish such an analysis path, it was decided to organize the analysis in two axes that, according to Lotman, structure the artistic text: syntagmatic and paradigmatic. However, it should be noted that there are analysis processes that involve both axes.

On the syntagmatic axis, the elements that structure the artistic text, i.e. its internal logic and semantics were observed. The structural characteristics of the text as well as the elements that form structurally equivalent elements (internal recoding) were analyzed.

On the paradigmatic axis, repetition (which can have several levels such as phonological, grammatical, lexical-semantic, syntactic) was studied, i.e. the equivalences and leveling of elements that structure the poetic work and that are not equivalent in the natural language (external recoding). The metaphor works well for understanding this purpose and values, for it is part of its nature to make equivalent originally different code. The paradigmatic axis, as it is related to the external recoding and the equivalence axis, is part of the cultural element. On this axis, cultural codes and values that cut across the text and shape the structure and content of texts were observed. Thus, relations between Caicedo's literary work and the cultural elements surrounding the semiosphere of his Afro-Creole community were established.

The four poems analyzed are part of the recording obtained in the *performances* Caicedo uses to make in community events. For the analysis, they were transcribed despite the problems arising from partially omitting the phonological features that enrich their meaning. As the poems are not titled from the audio source, they were numbered consecutively (poems 1, 2, 3 y 4 -p1, p2, p3, p4). The first three poems were organized following the chronological order of events conveyed in their verses. The selection of the four poems was made considering precisely the relationship with those events.

3. Results

3.1. Recent history and present situation of the community

The cartographic exercises helped to observe the existence of a series of events that decimate the community's capacities, to the extent that they plunged it into economic stress, political invisibility, and a crisis of collective relations. However, yearning for justice and sustainable economic alternatives were also represented on the maps, which would help to overcome the difficult situation the community is suffering at present.

In the territory cartographies (see Figure 1), three main issues surfaced: (1) the relationship between specific places and objects and decisive historical events, (2) the appreciation of nature as a necessary resource to live and live together, and (3) the search for an economic project. In all the drawings there are fruit trees, the Sabaletas and Anchicayá rivers, the main road, and cars driving on it. In most cases, the trees depicted are *chontaduro* palms without fruit, affected by a plague (*cucarrón picudo*). When the *chontaduro* palm was drawn with fruit it was because, according to them, that is how they would like to see the tree "loaded" with fruit. Likewise, the river was represented with and without fish to

show that they abounded before and the community used to fish them, but it all changed due to the landslide caused by the hydroelectric power plant managed by company Empresa de Energía del Pacífico S.A. ESP (EPSA [11], owned by the spanish group Unión Fenosa. Via the road and cars, the participants pointed out the paramilitary incursions. However, the road was used sometimes to represent their projects of production alternatives related to agriculture and tourism.

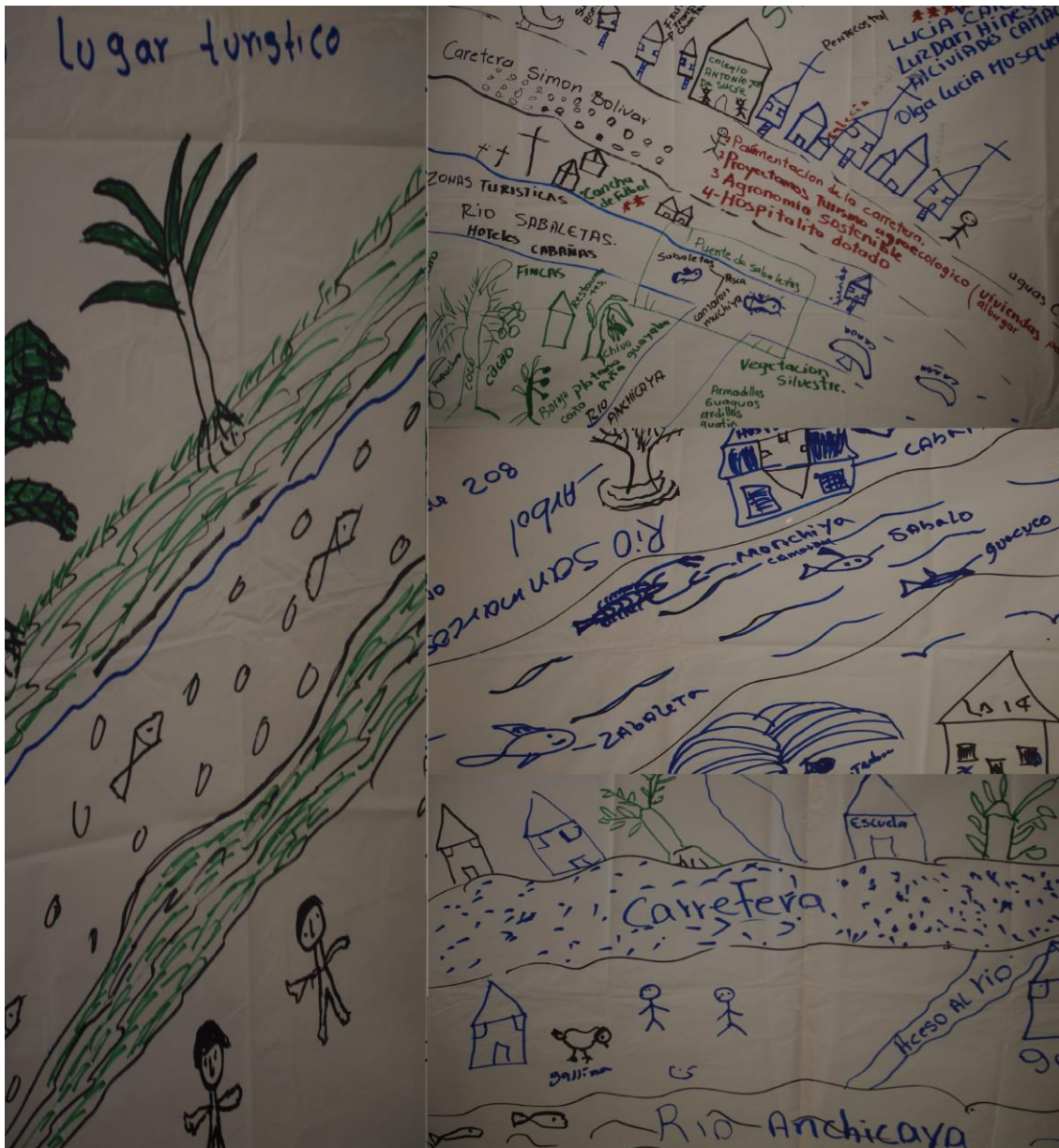


Figure 1: Shows territory cartographies. Own preparation.

In the body cartographies, individual and collective values articulated around a community spirit threatened by external agents prevailed. At the individual level, responsibility, honesty, respect, humility, righteousness, solidarity, and kindness were mentioned. At the collective level, a reference to unity, perseverance, and cooperation was made. It was also found that singing and dancing are

activities generating cohesion and maintaining the willingness of those displaced to return to their territory. As occurred with territory maps, *chontaduro* was often mentioned. The fruit was located in a significant part of the silhouettes, such as the heart, the belly or the hands, which reveals its material and immaterial value for the community.

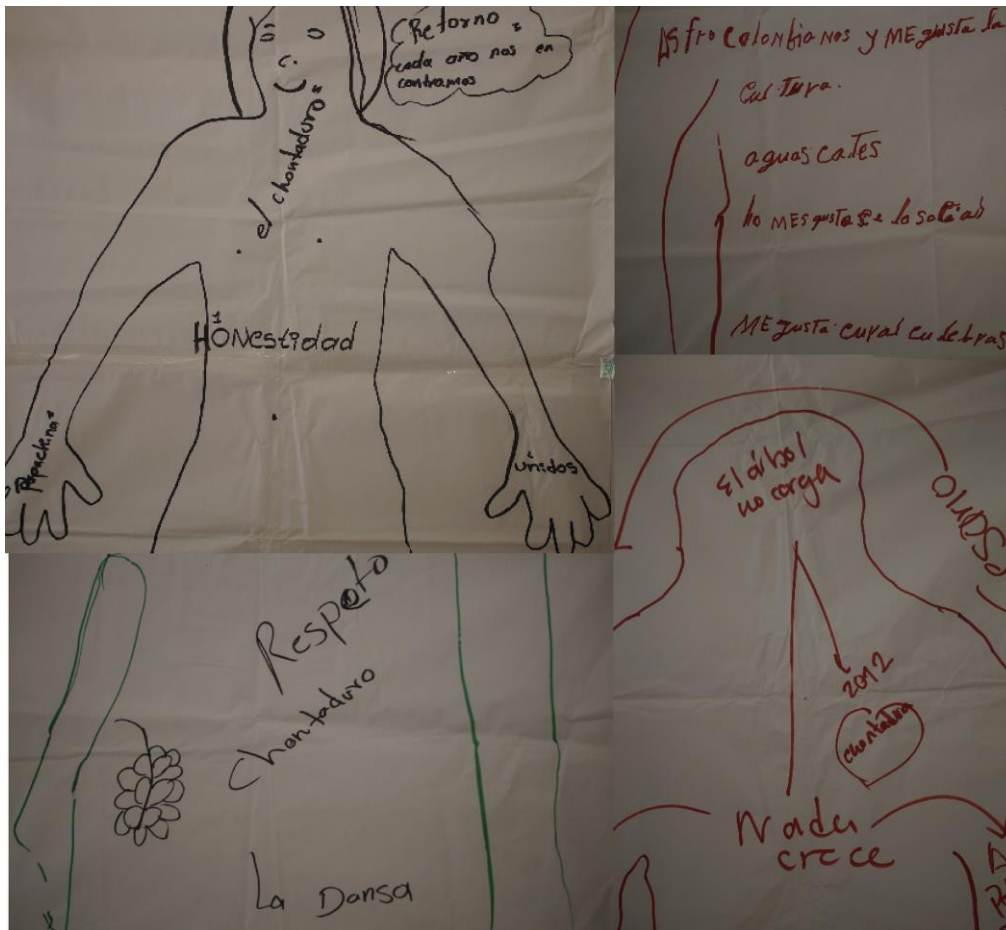


Figure 2: Sample of body cartographies. Own preparation.

The work with territory and body maps allows to approach some events and elements that condense the recent past and present of the community. The landslide, the incursions by violent agents, and the glyphosate aerial spraying were external events that marked the territory externally and negatively. Some of the most relevant and positive intra-community symbolic marks are the river, the road, the surrounding environment (certainly exuberant) and the musical and festive heritage. The *chontaduro* has, due to its saturation and frequency of appearance, a particular status, being the main node of the community's historical, identity, economic, and political reflections. It was defined as a valuable fruit (with high demand in the market), powerful (aphrodisiac, fertilizer, nutritional) and binding (traditional, produced communally). However, it should be noted that the cartographic exercises performed did not help to establish a chronological order of the events mentioned, above all, those related to the economic and cultural decline of the Village.

The pending chronological interrelation was achieved via semi-structured interviews. Moreover, the testimonies obtained helped to delve into some situations that, taken together, constitute a serious legal, economic, environmental, and cultural damage which threatens the community's existence in the material and immaterial planes. The number of problems arising from the landslide, paramilitary incursions, glyphosate aerial spraying, and the logging and mining ban makes life in the Village untenable in the current state of affairs. Against this background, the most optimistic testimonies underscored the need to think about production alternatives or to make new efforts to recover *chontaduro*, even if no concrete plans were discussed at any instance. In contrast, the most pessimistic forecast noted that all that is left to do is to wait to die if one is too old to leave the Village if there is a chance. Most of the results are presented in Table 1.

Before 2000	2000	2001	2003	2009- 2011	After de 2011
Economic and social welfare	First paramilitary incursion	Landslide at Anchicayá river	Second paramilitary incursion	Glyphosate aerial spraying	Economic sabotage
Abundant production of <i>chontaduro</i> . Dedicated fishing, mining and other crops.	Armed men come to and go out of the Village. quickly Targeted killings. First-wave displacement.	The dam gates managed by EPSA are opened and a landslide occurs and flows into the Anchicayá river. Fish die and crops are seriously damaged Second-wave displacement.	Armed men come to district Sabaletas and go out of the Village. Targeted killings. Third-wave displacement.	At least five small planes that sprayed fluids close to the land were sighted, not only over the mountains and <i>chontaduro</i> and subsistence crops but also over houses and rivers. The procedure was repeated in approximately monthly intervals. The frequency varied according to testimonies.	In the context of Santos administration of war against illegal mining, they were denied the permits for mining exploitation, even small-scale extraction. The police destroy their backhoes and other tools. They also ban logging because their territory borders on a forest reserve. All these events create a serious state of economic
				The <i>chontaduro</i> crisis	
				Shortly after glyphosate aerial spraying (between 1 and 3 months according to testimonies), the palms were burned (<i>guarapiaron</i>) and fermented due to the heat. The surviving palms were infested with a beetle (<i>picuo</i>) that feed on its stems and puts the eggs there. It was impossible to finish the plague infestation, for the abandoned farms on account of displacement were used by the insect to hide and reproduce again.	

				<p>The plague, together with the soil's high acidity after spraying rendered the palms sterile.</p> <p>In an attempt to save <i>chontaduro</i>, spraying was made with fertilizers that have secondary effects, especially on the sexual and reproductive health of those who had direct contact with them. Despite that, <i>chontaduro</i> did not recover and the other crops are in a very poor condition.</p>	<p>that translates into hopelessness, misery, and new displacement .</p>
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Table 1: Systematization of testimonies' results

3.2. Analysis from the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes

The findings of the literary and sociosemiotic analysis are presented, whose objective focuses on showing the cultural value of Caicedo's poetry.

3.2.1. Syntagmatic axis

Although Caicedo's poems have been transcribed based on versions initially audio- and video-codified, spatial and structural planning of the recodified and written version according to semantic, meter, rhythmic, syntactic, and phonological criteria was obtained. The most basic unit for organizing the poems was the couplet like a meter and rhythmic constant. Couplets (without forgetting the rare cases when something similar to a tercet or tertiary rhyme is used) form larger segments that are delimited based on their semantic function, i.e. according to the meaning of the message. These segments could be stanzas; however, it is worth remembering that the author's spatial planning in his notes is not available. The couplets constituting the poems are not necessarily isometric; they are made up of verses of mayor art (even though there is great variation in the number of syllables, 15-16 syllables per verse are the most common) and they show assonance in most verses and to a lesser extent consonance. For example:

Tan recta como es la palma en su forma de crecer (15 syllables)
 (As straight as the palm is when it grows)
 y así seremos nosotros en nuestra forma de ser (16 syllables, consonance).
 (so will we be in the way we behave)

According to the organization of the decodification of the poems, the first three suggest a semantic structure that underlies the spatial planning: each one has introduction, development, and conclusion. The introduction is in the first segment (two couplets), the development in the subsequent segments, and the conclusion in the last segment (three couplets in p2 and p3, a tercet, and a couplet in p1). This structural form is similar to the compositional elements of the traditional story. One of the most

important findings, as will be explained further on, is that the use of this structure is closely related to the message the poems intend to convey.

The fourth poem has many of the elements aforementioned, especially rhythm and meter. As the purpose of its message differs clearly from that of the first three poems, its spatial planning, which aligns with the semantic structure, also differs from the previous structural-semantic order (introduction, development, conclusion). Its structure is divided into two segments (two stanzas at the spatial level) and is established first by a rhythmic and meter mark and second basically by the meaning and content of each stanza. The poem begins with the main idea expressed via an anaphora which, in turn, works as a rhythmic and meter mark: “Established law” (p4). Thus, an aspect to be highlighted is that, although the poem has isometric couplets and the segments are formed in a heterometric variety of verses, there is regularity in the number of syllables (between 14 and 16) that contributes to musicality and fluency of assonance at the phonological level (*performance*).

Another relevant aspect is that the poems’ rhyme and meter are not restricted to written elements because the verses’ phonological level provides more elements to understand the rhythms. The author emphasizes phonologically some fragments of the poems when making the *performance*, thereby marking the stress and intonation that semanticizes what he intends to communicate.

3.2.2. Paradigmatic axis

Semantic structure

One of the main findings at the semantic structural level is the close relationship between the narrative strategy and its meaning. The similarity between the first three poems and the narrative structure (story) is not futile, for this resource functions to tell the stories in each poem. The poem 1 narrates the arrival of the paramilitary to Village 8; poem two narrates what happened with the landslide that affected the territory, and poem three talks about events related to glyphosate aerial spraying of *chontaduro* palms. At the beginning, the poems deal with the topic they want to talk about:

Y ponga usted mucho cuidado lo que le voy a contar
(And pay close attention to what I am about to tell you)
quinientos mil metros de lodo en el Río Anchicayá,
(five hundred thousand cubic meters of mud into the Anchicayá river)
nos cogió como sorpresa como la tentación
(It took us by surprise just like temptation)
vino rodando hacia abajo sobre toda la región. (p2).
(It came rolling down all over the region)

Secondly, the author examines what happened in detail, talking about experiences and revealing the collective consequences this tragic episode brought about. Thirdly, the author finishes with a conclusion in the form of denunciation and resistance about what occurred:

Y nos hemos reunido toda la comunidad
(And we the community have all gathered)
que digan los de la EPSA cuánto nos van a pagar.
(Let’s hear from EPSA how much they will pay us)
Este río es de nosotros, usted lo sabe muy bien,

(This is our river; you know it very well)
usted que se fue metiendo, así como el comején
(You who have moved forward as termites have infested us).
Quiero que no haga más daño en nuestro río Anchicayá
(I want you to stop damaging our Anchicayá river)
porque de esa agua tomamos toda la comunidad. (p2).
(Because all the community drinks water from this river)

Caicedo has the concern to show a story in verses from a deeply personal and community experience. This explains his recourse to this structure -introduction-development-conclusion- and that way there appears the first aspect that makes Caicedo's poetry widen the comprehension horizon of the events that occurred in Village 8: he shows poetic compositions articulating a more structured and complete narrative of the facts, unlike the interviews and cartographies.

Thus, he tended to compose heterometric verses of mayor art by couplets [12] and the use of assonance provides more freedom to transmit his narrative element in the first three poems. This poetic freedom is also reflected in the fact that the composition in segments (stanzas), so peculiar to Caicedo, and the lack of pre-established and traditional patterns of metric composition, do not lead to build relations with already existing canonic or dominant poetic structures (such as sonnet, Spanish stanzas of ten octosyllabic lines, etc.). The most traditional in Caicedo's poetry is found in the basic structure of couplets, and ancient form of stanza and/or rhyme that reveals one of the diasporic elements of the author's Afro-creole character.

Another finding to underscore is that poetic freedom is expressed also in the performative component of the poetry. The value of stress, rhythm, and body language that occurs at the phonological level provides not only the re-enacting of the poetic text but also semantic value. For example, when on one occasion Caicedo says in verse: "eso es como una ruina o, ¿qué decimos? infierno" (p3) ("that is like a ruin, or should we say hell?"), his stressing the word "infierno" shows how spraying the *chontaduro* palm was a very unpleasant experience. Moreover, in the performative act, Caicedo uses an intonation more suitable for telling a story than reciting poetry; for this reason, the stress is not focused exclusively on the grammatical or metric level. Unlike the cartographies or interviews where facts are described, here Caicedo shows aspects that are more related to feelings, emotions, and traumatic experiences.

Memory

Caicedo's poetry is structured as a form of memory. The use of a structure closer to the narrative, that is the case of the first three poems, reveals at first the creation of a story that is not only the sequence of a logical order of some events but also synthesizes elements from the enunciation of a tragic event and the collective consequences in the community to the denouncing that occurs at the end. It is evident there that, unlike interviews and cartographies, Caicedo's poetry provides elements of community action and resistance according to the narrated events (this will be elaborated later on).

As an attempt to build a collective memory, Caicedo's poetry uses an element that is close to oral literature: the use of couplets. As aforementioned, as a mnemonic resource, the couplet's form is more efficient; a structure used in oral communication as a form of memory. However, the similarity with orality goes beyond that, for, at the performative moment, the poet-narrator shows his work of verbal

art and sings it with some specific elements of oral literature, such as the proposal ability of the narrator or reciter, which brings about text changes (Maglia y Moñino, 2015).

As the communities from Village 8 have been the main audience of Caicedo, his work will likely function as a catalyzer of events and memories striving to make the audience know and/or forget about its past and act in the present. Due to the displacement these communities have suffered, the few that remain in the territory and those who manage to come back hear Caicedo narrate and perform their past; for this reason, his poetry becomes a memory conglomerate that prompts action. Moreover, it was found that this semantic and performative function constitutes the poetic text, and thus poetry cannot be reduced to the written text.

Identity

Besides the characteristic of memory, it was also found that Caicedo's poetry includes elements of identity and the community's territory. By using specific vocabulary, the author takes the audience to territories (Río Anchicayá o Guaimía) and traditional practices belonging to the communities and provides their message with a larger semantic load. The insight into certain aspects of identity concerning memory is one of the aspects not present in the cartographies and the interviews.

Grande ha sido su tormenta que parece una bobada
(Large has been the storm that seems nonsense)
me voy con mi atarrayita y ya no consigo más nada. (p2).
(I go with my little fishnet but I get nothing at all)

[...]

No tenemos más que hacer, vámonos a barequiar
(There's nothing else to do, let's search for gold)
y si viene el helicóptero también nos puede bombear. (p3).
(If the helicopter arrives, it will spray us too)

The words "atarrayita" and "barequiar", a noun and a verb, refer to two cultural practices, fishing, and small-scale mining; the first word means a fishnet and the second the action of extracting gold particles by using a shallow pan. Moreover, the specific use of such words as "mchetié", "dentraron", "bombear", "maduro" or "tambalear" corresponds to a jargon belonging to the communities portrayed in the poems.

Besides this vocabulary, there is an additional element we find in Caicedo's poetry: thanks to the continuous use of the first plural person, the collective meaning is mostly present in the poems precisely because this is one of the forms how the poet understands his reality: identity, experience, and collective memory. The message is expressed collectively and not exclusively through the author's most personal experience.

Por eso estamos aquí parados y desanimados
(That's why we're standing here, wholly disheartened)
ya no queremos gozar, tampoco vamos a sembrar
(We don't want to enjoy; we don't want to sow)
porque manda mi gobierno que nos vuelva a fumigar. (p.3).
(because the government orders to spray us again)

The use of language reveals another important aspect: the lexical use in the poems also expands to the use of a language referring to signs related to sacred and profane based on a religious Christian code present in the communities' identity. Caicedo's poems are oriented toward an ethical reconnection [13] that strengthens the audience's sense of belonging to the community and their identity. For that purpose, the author regards a series of elements as sacred through preexistent religious figures in his imaginary and by denouncing the profanation of sacred elements of their territory.

Whoever does not do good, in Caicedo's poetry, deserves to be punished. God's creative work is revealed in good: "palm", "fruits", "holy water", "river", "divine law", bodies, life, traditional economy, welfare, enjoyment, and love. In contrast, evil is revealed in "temptation", "storm", "termites" (plague), "disease", "death", bombs, and "hell". Thus, a series of agents appear who break with the sacred order, for example, when Caicedo says: "my heart would let me know when death was lurking" (p1), whose result is a massacre:

La Chacha se tiró al río y más allá se saltó
(Chacha dove into the river and sprang out down there)
la muerte estaba en el puente y desde allá le disparó" (Caicedo, P1),
(death was on the bridge and shot her from there)

Water is then desecrated, even if it is "holy" when the aggressors fled: "and very quickly they hid in the water" (p1). This same aspect is desecrated again by temptation and the storm that brought about the landslide:

Porque ya no utilizamos esta agua tan bendita
(Because we don't use that holy water anymore)
ya que grande ha sido su tormenta y el Río Anchicayá
(as its storm was very large and the Anchicayá river)
porque mató una niña de cuatro años de edad. (p2).
(because a killed a 4-year old little girl)

Evil is a sign that reveals itself in the plague that brought spraying causing disease and death:

Porque el veneno es muy fuerte
(Because the poison is very strong)
a mí me quiso matar, me puso a tambalear,
(It almost killed me, it made me stagger)
también me puso a tumbar muchas palmas de chontaduro
(It also made me cut many *chontaduro* palms)
trajo muchos cucarrones y de eso estoy bien seguro.
(It brought many beetles, of that I'm certain)
[...]
Porque eso es como matar gente
(Because that is like killing people)
eso es como una ruina o ¿qué decimos? Infierno. (p3).
(It's like a ruin, or what do we say? Like hell)

According to this logic, the possibility to continue God's work in human work is hampered:

No tenemos más qué hacer, vámonos a barequear
(We don't have anything else to do, let's look for gold)
Y si viene el helicóptero también nos pueda matar". (p3).
(And if the helicopter arrives, it can also kill us)

The search for good by the community is also ennobled in Caicedo's poetry with the continuous call to obey the divine mandate. It is the collective order, communion, the answer that members of the community should have before evil.

Dando un paso hacia adelante nos cogimos de las manos (p3).
(Stepping forward, we held hands)
[...]
Porque de esa agua tomamos toda la comunidad (p2)
(Because all the community drinks that water)
[...]
El corregimiento ocho nos cogimos de las manos (p1).
(In Village 8 we all held hands)

This poetic construction helps to find a religious explanation of wrongs suffered and the teachings and tasks that the community must accept to recover the desecrated good. Caicedo's poetry helps to reflect on the importance of reestablishing order, law, and divine justice which have been discredited by human work.

There is an additional aspect we find in Caicedo's poem 4 and relates to the community's identity. Both the poem's structure and its poetic and rhythmic resources are oriented toward communicating a moralizing message in the context of sacred and profane. In fact, via a metaphor of the *chontaduro* palm, the poem seeks to explain the main topic: human ministration similar to natural and divine ministration. These codes become equivalent and establish a new meaning and a new narrative about the communities in Village 8 and the profound meaning that the *chontaduro* palm should have.

Each segment of the poem is introduced by a verse that has an anaphora ("established law", which refers to the main topic) and is formed by a smaller number of syllables) (10 and 14) in comparison with the rest of the poem's verses (between 15 and 17). It is evident at the phonological level that the sonority of each first verse, due to the smaller number of syllables, makes a mark, a kind of attention call, via the voice and stress change, which breaks the rhythmic partially but establishes a link at the semantic level.

Even if the text has the same topic, the ministration about the divine law (duty, morals, enforceability), each stanza develops this topic with certain particularity. The first stanza uses the metaphor of the *chontaduro* palm to review the elements belonging to duty: to maintain righteousness. The palm itself grows straight without bending and bears good fruit, so too should whoever follow the law. The palm was created by God as an example to make his law understandable, to be raised in righteousness, and to bear good fruit. That way, great closeness to the Biblical parables is evident.

In this sense, the equivalence can be observed through the contrast good-evil, straight-bent, fruit production- “sterility”. The way the *chontaduro* palm’s trunk grows and its natural production of fruit are compared with the moral acting, the duty, and the Christian norms. “The way of growing” and “very ripe fruits” are made equivalent to “the way of being”.

In the second segment, divine law and its fulfillment depend on ministration, i.e. to serve God. The poet warns whoever overlooks the underlying message of the *chontaduro* palm, i.e. who disrespects the law and its fulfillment, to what is righteous, to minister. It could also be an interpretation of the material living conditions surrounding the community at present. Thus, there is an equivalence between “not to know how to minister” and not to fulfill the divine law, and “displacement” and “punishment.”

Call for action: resistance

The poems, besides describing and addressing adverse events the community has experienced, circumscribes them to a context of denunciation, demand, and resistance. This characteristic is added to the aspects that are not seen in the interviews and the cartographies. Even though these elements are present in all the work, they stand out in poem 3. The denunciation of the negative effects of glyphosate spraying and the small-scale mining ban appear in the second segment:

Porque eso es como matar gente
(It is like killing people)
eso es como una ruina o que decimos infierno
(It is like a ruin or we should say hell)
pero toda la culpa se la echamos al gobierno. (p3).
(but the one to blame for this is the government)

It is possible to interpret the expression “It is like killing people” as a reference to the extinction of *chontaduro* because of the importance of this fruit for the community’s economy and culture. The outcome of its disappearance is the loss of economic support, everyday practices, and the community’s identity. In this context, the extinction of *chontaduro* represents the extinction of the community. Moreover, the small-mining ban also constrained the possibilities to obtain economic support, and this worsened the community’s economic situation.

Y nos hemos reunido toda la comunidad
(And we all the community have gathered)
que digan los de la EPSA cuándo nos van a pagar. (p2).
(We demand EPSA to tell us when they will pay us)

Caicedo refers to a community “meeting” as the most effective action to demand reparation for the damages produced by EPSA. This is a fragment that expresses more directly an invitation to demand community rights:

Vámonos a desplazar toda la comunidad
(We all the community will march in protest)
Vámonos a ir hasta allá, estos son nuestros derechos
(Let’s go there, these are our rights)

Quiero que usted mi gobierno, ponga la mano en su pecho
(I want you, government, to feel it in your heart)
O se pone a meditar y ve si tengo derechos. (p3).
(Or think it over and see if I have rights)

This call to struggle for the territory seeking social welfare and the preservation of natural resources is based on a long-time effort by the inhabitants of the Village to build a decent place to live: special care of the natural resources, *chontaduro* production, creation of family and neighborhood networks, and the formal recognition of the collective territory are all factors that inspire Caicedo to reiterate in his poetry that the community has a legitimate right over its territory, as he aptly versifies: “these are our rights” (p3). Thus, it is unavoidable that the community mobilizes and acts for the reconstruction of their territory and social fabric.

After incentivizing the demand of the community rights, the author presents the limit of his responsibility to achieve this endeavor and insists conclusively on the commitment by the community, the State, and the civil society to repair the consequences of war and the State abandonment (probably about the national post-agreement context):

Y esto yo lo dejo ahí, extiéndalo usted más allá
(And I leave it to you, you expand it even further)
componiendo los errores sí lograremos la paz
(Correcting mistakes, we will achieve peace)
el resto de pura guerra. (p3).
(the rest is simply war)

Caicedo encourages to political action, to continue working for the territory and maintaining collective faith before adverse situations. Thus, these elements act as a mechanism that nourishes the community’s resistance.

Son las tribus de achicagüeños, también afrocolombianos
(They are achicagüeños tribes, also Afro-Colombian)
dando un paso hacia adelante nos cogimos de las manos (p3).
(Stepping forward, we held hands)

All these elements arising from the interpretation of Caicedo’s work are related to the results of the first part of the research. An association characteristic was found between Caicedo’s perspective as a poet and the community’s perspective: community values. The existence of an effort by the community to maintain collective and individual values: unity, collaboration, perseverance, and protection of nature is a resource used by the poet to make a call for political action.

4. Conclusions

The research intended to address one general recommendation found in the literature reviewed for this paper: to use poetry as a privileged resource to understand more accurately the reality of black communities (Ochoa, Convers y Hernández, 2015; Freja, 2012; Tobón, 2016; Oslender, 2003, 2005; Pinilla, 2017). In this process, it was revealed that interdisciplinarity concerning Afro-Colombian

studies is no accident but results from an effort to integrate, into the theoretical and methodological levels, the necessary elements to understand a multidimensionally complex reality. In the Afro-Colombian communities, the forms of oral tradition build systems for cultural communication and transmission that in turn enlighten the structure of the oral and literary text. This is a two-way process that ultimately characterizes its aesthetic and cultural experience and makes unfeasible the insights based on a single methodological approach.

The planning of the study into two phases (first cartographies and interviews, and then sociosemiotic analysis), together with the discussion of Lotman's theories, helped to reveal the plot of events we intended to unveil. In this sense, the cartographies and interviews functioned as a reference framework for assessing the analysis of Caicedo's poems. Thus, it could be said that the sociocultural function of such poems consists in making an open story, in which not only the victimizing events suffered by the community are gathered but they are also resignified via an ethical reconnection, and some common values are projected onto the scenario of resistance and political and cultural vindication.

The findings obtained via cartographies and interviews show that the community of Village 8 has suffered not only different forms of violence throughout history but, what is more worrying, is in an acute state of economic and cultural groveling. The former is due to the environmental degradation of the territory, the disappearance of their main crop (*chontaduro*), and the government ban of other traditional economic activities. The latter responds to the displacement and State abandonment, which has resulted in the weakening of the community's shared symbolic repertoires, damage of their self-image, and the emergence of an atmosphere of helplessness that often translates into resignation and resentment. These outcomes, far from being a singularity of the Colombian Afro-Pacific, coincide considerably with those by other studies (Huezo, 2017). In this sense, the results obtained in the first phase of the study should be added as evidence that points to the urgent need to rethink an integral approach to territorial peace in post-agreement Colombia.

The poems' analysis through the understanding of the artistic text as proposed by Yuri Lotman helped to establish continuities between the literature produced by Caicedo and his sociocultural context. The poems' semantic structure and the use of stylistic and metric resources are directly proportional to the message being communicated. The structure of the narrative order, the poetic freedom, and the use of stylistic resources are aspects used in Caicedo's poetry intending to convey artistically an active synthesis of the communities' active memory, identity, and resistance. Caicedo's poetry weaves relationships and creates continuities with the community's

codes and values, establishing as an articulating and synthetic factor of the memory's complexity, thereby deepening the collective identity. There is also a powerful call for action and resistance, which the poet articulates into the community's memory and identity. Thus, a new semantics is established, which synthesizes the past, the present and the future of the community in a spirit of resistance.

From a disciplinary view, the two-way link between poetry and sociocultural context seems to be not only a useful resource for studying communication in community contexts, but also unavoidable when dealing with black communities. This idea is fully backed by similar studies, among which not only the studies cited at the beginning of this article but also by the results obtained. Participants in the first phase insisted on the importance of orality, singing, and dancing for making sense of the events they have lived. Moreover, Caicedo's poetic text, conceived to be performed in the community, makes

converge complex networks of community communication and promotes especially a change of collective narratives by making equivalent what in other testimonies was inequivalent. In other words, as a communicative phenomenon, Caicedo's poetic performance, besides contributing with a density of shared meanings, is not limited to reproducing but instead challenges hopelessness and calls for resistance.

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Notes

[1] I leave it to you, you expand it even further.

[2] Law 70 of 1993 (Agosto 27) “By which transitional article 55 of the Political Constitution” of Colombia is developed was the first law in Colombia that recognized specifically the rights of black communities and defined them as follows: «Article 2.5 Black Community. It is a set of families of Afro-Colombian ancestry who have their own culture, share a history, and have their traditions and customs in the relationship field-population, which reveal and conserve awareness that distinguishes them from other ethnic groups ». For Wabgou, Arocha, Salgado, & Carabalí (2012), This legal category brings together the identity of the “Afro-Colombian, Black, Raizal, and Palenquero Social Movement” that integrates the black population from North Pacific (Chocó), South Pacific (Valle del Cauca, Cauca, and Nariño), Eastern Plains, Orinoquía, Amazonia, Coffee Trail, Caribbean (Magdalena River, Cauca River, Córdoba, and Bolívar), San Basilio de Palenque (where the so-called “palenques” are located), San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina (inhabited by Raizal populations).

Thus, the concept of Afro-Colombian communities used in this research intends to recover the conceptualization made by the scientific theory and the literary studies about this topic, without this meaning undermining the identity and the rights implied by the terms of the black community, and/or Afro-Colombian Social Movement, Black, Raizal, and Palenquero.

[3] Cultural ecology was the favorite current to develop anthropological investigations in this area because, from an inductive method, material and environmental conditions prevail as subject matter.

[4] The Afro-Colombian literature as a literary category has been a subject matter in search of its origins (Escobar, 2012), its meanings if it is included in the literary field (Valero, 2013) and the characteristics that are found in the works of Afro-Colombian literature (Valero, 2013. Ortiz, 2004 y Capote 2014).

[5] In 2010, the Ministry of Culture implemented the project “Biblioteca de Literatura Afrocolombiana”, in which works and anthologies by several Afro-Colombian authors were published. Other anthologies are ¡Negras Somos! Antología de 21 mujeres poetas afrocolombianas (2008) and Poesía afrocolombiana: Helcías Martán Góngora (2008).

[6] Such as Candelario Obeso, Arnoldo Palacios, Mary Grueso Romero, Manuel Zapata

[7] The purpose of semiotics of culture is “a discipline that examines the interaction of differently structured semiotic systems, internal unevenness in a semiotic space, and the necessity of cultural and semiotic polyglotism” p. 52 to study (Lotman, 1988, pp. 52-53). It means that signs and sign systems are studied, which exist and function in a semiotic continuum (semiosphere) and not in isolation and univocally (Lotman, 2005). Even if the Tartu semiotic school was well-known, mainly in the 60s and 70s, its ideas are still relevant for cultural studies (Seredkina, 2014, p. 1343), as is the case of the semiotics of culture that provides an effective path to study linguistic culturology (Wang Mingyu, 2011). For the study of literature, connections have been established between semiotics of culture and sociology (Carrillo, 2003) as well as semiotics of culture and cultural studies (Jiménez, 2015).

[8] This study has provided analysis tools for poetics (Barthes, 1994; Genette, 1998; Todorov, 1975; Kristeva, 1981b).

[9] To understand the scope of this issue, see “Literary Anthropology: A new interdisciplinary approach to people, signs and literature” (Poyatos, 1988), where the origin of literary anthropology, its definition, its theoretical and methodological approaches and a concrete analysis of some literary works are presented (see also Poyatos, 1979). Contemporary studies such as those by Cohen (2013) Dai Yun-hong (2012), Li Feng-liang (2004), Wiles (2018), and Ye Shuxia (2010a, 2010b) discuss the subject matter and present views of literary anthropology whose approach is not only focused on ethnographic and cultural research but also on anthropological creative writing (see Wulff, 2016).

[10] Based on the first language (natural language) but not equivalent to it. In the case of poetry, Lotman says that if we retelly it “in ordinary speech, we destroy its structure and consequently present the receiver with a volume of information entirely different from that contained in the original poem”. (1977, p. 11).

[11] This event prompted the Class Action No. 2002-4584, started on October 1st, 2002, at the Administrative Dispute Tribunal of Valle del Cauca, Mg. Luz Elena Sierra Valencia. This lawsuit has been followed by the Constitutional Court under judgment SU686/15 and the Section Five of the Administrative Chamber of the Council of State in a condemnatory sentence of December 9, 2010, but so far, no material performance of these judiciary decisions has occurred. It is estimated that the economic assessment of damage amounts to one hundred eighty billion eight hundred eighty-four millions one hundred forty-nine thousand five Colombian pesos (\$180.884´149. 005.oo), roughly 49´961.297.08 Euro on January 30th, 2019.

[12] It is important to clarify that the couplet is a simple, easy to remember, poetic form of composition, that has been linked to popular, oral, and/or musical forms of verse (sayings, children’s poetry, riddles, refrains, aphorisms, etc.)

[13] For a detailed description of this concept, see Alexander (2005).

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