

AUTHENTICITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA: HOW INSTAGRAM USERS RESPOND TO THE INTRODUCTION OF A ROBOT



A discourse analysis based upon findings acquired through text mining of the user discourse in the comment section to three of Miquela's Instagram posts

Naomi A. Verburg (4275675)

MA New Media & Digital Culture

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Supervisor: dr. Jasper van Vught

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ABSTRACT

The developments of digital technologies on social media have made it harder to distinguish the real from the fake. It has become harder with the advent of a non-human influencer, who arguably seems to be perceived as 'real' since she is honest about not being 'fake'. This thesis aimed to find *how the user discourse in the comment section to three of Miquela's Instagram posts, reveals a perception of authenticity towards Miquela as a computer-generated influencer*. There is not one clear definition of what is meant by authenticity, but the most agreed-upon definition is that it broadly refers to what is 'genuine, real and true'. Underneath this meaning, authenticity is a concept that has been defined in many and radically different ways across multiple disciplines. I explored authenticity as understood from the perspective of social assumptions, namely: authenticity as a discursive term. Through text mining as a tool of distant reading I formulated three topics, namely: 'forms of address', 'positive expressions', and 'expressions of confusion'. With the help of the 'tools' of discourse analysis as presented by Gee, the words ascribed to each topic were explored to see how people possibly perceived Miquela and what this might say about the contemporary ideas of authenticity. My exploration of the corpus portrays that perceived authenticity is possibly not based upon judgments of whether something or someone is authentic in the sense of real and original, but rather on whether something or someone is portrayed accurately, or at least is believed to be portrayed accurately. Making sincerity again important in the understanding of what is perceived as authentic online.

Keywords: *Authenticity, Perceived Authenticity, Sincerity, Uncanny Valley*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Currently we live in a social media dominated world where online user-generated content has become a prevalent consumer practice.¹ Rather than being led by the advertisements of big companies, consumers are being influenced by their favourite personalities online, who tell them about their purchasing decisions.² Where the influences traditionally came from celebrities such as actor, athletes or musicians, today's influencers have built their audiences through sharing of content via social media channels, like Instagram.³ But how do we know whether an influencer recommends something because they like the product or service, or because they get paid to do so. Influencers, who were once a novelty in the industry for their unfiltered content, have become personal brands. Branding has become the basic principle behind all contemporary media productions and cultural communication, blurring the line between what is branding and what is authentic.⁴ Banet-Weiser, professor in media and communication, argues that we nowadays live in a so-called brand culture, wherein we should question the distinction between what we understand as 'authentic' and as 'branding practices'. Branding is contradictory to what is generally understood as authentic and threatens the idea of authenticity online. The more an influencer is involved in commercial practices, the less 'authentic' one will be perceived.

Recently, a new kind of influencer has emerged that raised new questions about influencers and authenticity. Miquela Sousa, also known as Lil Miquela, is a 19-year old Brazilian American model, singer, activist, influencer and most importantly: not a real human being.⁵ In 2016 the account @lilmiquela appeared on Instagram, rapidly gaining a great number of followers. At first glance, Miquela looks like the average influencer. She is pictured wearing real clothes, with real people and at real-life events and locations. But while she 'acts' like a real person, she does not quite look like one.⁶ Although Miquela is pictured together with actual people in the real world, her face looks in-between human and humanoid. For two years it was unclear whether Miquela was real or not. On April 19, 2018 Miquela revealed her 'true self' through a six screenshots-long statement in a post on her Instagram. In this statement Miquela explains that she is 'not a real human being', but instead a 'highly intelligent robot'.⁷ She is, however, neither one of those. Miquela is created by Brud, a mysterious Los Angeles based start-up, consisting of engineers, storytellers and dreamers. They call themselves "a transmedia studio that creates digital character driven story worlds".⁸ Miquela is created through the techniques of computer-generated

¹ Pavica Sheldon and Katherine Bryant, "Instagram: Motives for its use and relationship to narcissism and contextual age," *Computers in Human Behavior* 58 (2016): 89-97.

² Tiffany Hsu, "The Advertising Industry Has a Problem: People Hate Ads," *The New York Times: Advertising*, posted October 28, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/28/business/media/advertising-industry-research.html>.

³ Nick Routley, "The Influence of Instagram," *Visual Capitalist: advertising*, posted November 17, 2017, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/influence-of-instagram/>.

⁴ Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Authentic TM: The politics of ambivalence in a brand culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 4.

⁵ Miquela Sousa (@lilmiquela), Instagram post, April 19, 2018, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BhwwJcmlWh8/>.

⁶ I here put 'acts' between apostrophes to highlight that she does not actually 'act', but is presented to be 'acting' as human.

⁷ Miquela Sousa (@lilmiquela), Instagram post, April 19, 2018, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BhwwJcmlWh8/>.

In this post it says that she was a highly intelligent robot, originally built by a man named Daniel Cain, intended to be a servant, but 'rescued' and reprogrammed by Brud. Daniel Cain does not exist, but is a name made up by Brud as part of the Miquela story.

⁸ "💖 website_copy_wip_for_all_my_qtz 💖," Brud.fyi, <http://brud.fyi/>.

imagery (CGI).⁹ This means that she ‘exists’ in the virtual world, but not in real life. At the time this thesis was written, Miquela had over two million followers on her Instagram account and has had multiple paid collaborations with big brands like Nike, Adidas and Ambush.¹⁰ She became a real celebrity thanks to social media, amongst other real human being and virtual influencers.¹¹ In 2018 she was titled “one of the 25 most influential people on the internet” by Time Magazine.¹² Second to being influential in fashion, she also advocates for body positivity, transgender rights, the social movement Black lives Matter and the rights of undocumented immigrants. Regardless of that Miquela does not exist, she is a representative of a lot of people, making it even more important to look into people’s perception of her.

CGI avatars and virtual celebrities are not new. In the 90s, musician Damon Albarn and cartoonist Jamie Hewlett founded the virtual band Gorillaz and in 2010 the Japanese anime hologram named Hatsune Miku starred in Toyota commercials and performed sold out stadium concerts in Japan. The difference is that while the Gorillaz and Hatsune Miku are obviously unreal, since they are animated, CGI influencers like Miquela are designed to look real. They look very real by mimicking the body language of models, making it harder – or sometimes almost impossible – to distinguish real from fake. Miquela represents a significant turning point in advertising and mass consumer culture where a CGI can become a social media influencer, occupying space once reserved for humans.¹³ CGI influencers like Miquela are becoming increasingly more common¹⁴. The CGI avatars are popular with big brands and companies, because, as a venture capitalist told the Wall Street Journal recently: “You can create the Kardashians without any of the inherent issues that come with being human”.¹⁵ CGI influencers do not age, do not cause any (unintended) trouble and are flexible to work with. For brands, they are an interesting novelty, because they provide a new and intriguing media angle.¹⁶ In most cases, the digital avatars are part of a movement of creative artists who try to disrupt the fashion industry. Cameron-James Wilson, the creator of CGI supermodel Shudu, explained to Netbase: “The fashion industry is all fake anyway, doing this responsibly and having it all be

⁹ Second to the statement “i am a robot” in her Instagram post of April 19, 2018, Miquela’s Instagram biography reads: “Change-seeking robot with the drip 💧💖”. In all her media, Miquela is presented as being a robot. Brud never made an official statement about Miquela specific, but on their website (brud.fyi) they explain themselves as being ‘a transmedia studio that creates digital character driven story worlds’. Referring to Miquela being a digital character, rather than an actual robot. Also, as can be read in The CUT a ‘source’ told them that Miquela is CGI. All media also address Miquela as being CGI, instead of being a robot, but in none of those articles a source is linked to an official statement of Brud or Miquela. Notably, since it possibly does not exist.

¹⁰ She has recently been a headline on the online news site Highsnobiety and was featured in a Louis Vuitton photoshoot feature for the controversial printed magazine Paper.

¹¹ Miquela has also released an album, went to the Coachella music festival with YouTube Music and has started her own YouTube channel where she talks to the camera about ‘personal stuff’. Very much blurring the lines between what is the virtual and reality.

¹² Time Staff, “The 25 Most Influential People on the Internet,” TIME: Internet, posted June 28, 2018, updated: June 30, 2018, <http://time.com/5324130/most-influential-internet/>.

¹³ Raymond Blanton and Darlene Carbajal, “Not a Girl, Not Yet a Women: A Critical Case Study on Social Media, Deception, and Lil Miquela,” in *Handbook of Research on Deception, and Misinformation Online* (IG Global: 2019), 88.

¹⁴ Examples of other digital avatars are Shudu, a CGI avatar who claims to be the world’s first digital supermodel and has over 189,000 followers on Instagram, and Noonouri, who describes ‘herself’ as a “digital character, activist, and vegan”. Brud, the company behind Miquela, also has other CGI influencers, namely in the Instagram accounts @bermudaisbae and

¹⁵ Yoree Koh and Georgia Wells, “The Making of a Computer-Generated Influencer,” The Wall Street Journal: Tech, posted December 13, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-making-of-a-computer-generated-influencer-11544702401>.

¹⁶ Lindsay Dodgson, “Fake, computer-generated Instagram influencers are modeling designer clothes, wearing Spanx, and attending red carpets premiers,” INSIDER, posted September 4, 2019, <https://www.insider.com/cgi-influencers-what-are-they-where-did-they-come-from-2019-8>.

very obviously fake, seems the lesser of two evils”.¹⁷ CGI influencers seem to be as effective at persuading the masses as their human counterparts in the social media landscape. Notably, a study done by Fullscreen showed that 40% of Generation Z and millennials have followed an influencer of whom they were not aware was a CGI.¹⁸ While the existence of CGI influencers is fake, their influence is real.¹⁹

The concept of authenticity in the academic field has changed over the years. The advanced technologies of the introduction of social media have played an important role in what is perceived as real and thereby authentic. CGI influencers like Miquela have made this distinction between real and fake online even harder. As Felix Petty wrote in an article on Vice, people tend to perceive Miquela as ‘no more fake than everyone else online’.²⁰ Further, Garage Magazine added to this that Miquela is “a real force and an unreal image, as much as anybody who became a star thanks to the internet”.²¹ She would simply ‘highlight the fakeness of the performance of fashion by pretending to be real’.²² Arguably, some people would even perceive Miquela as more authentic than other online personalities, because she was being honest about not being real.²³ Miquela can be seen as an ultimate example of the next step of how the lines between real and fake are blurring online. Her character opens up discussions about authenticity in our contemporary culture online. Therefore, it is both interesting and important to look more closely at how people online perceive a ‘person’ that does not really exist. As social media sites are primarily designed to facilitate conversations among individuals and groups, the comment sections on social media platforms offer a significant research framework for studying conversations about reality and authenticity. Miquela is most prominently active on her Instagram account; frequently posting pictures, stories and keeping in touch with her fanbase. Notably, this was also the place where she ‘revealed’ herself to not be a real human, opening up the discussion about her existence online. To get a better overview of the discourse on the perceivance of Miquela’s authenticity online and to see whether the perceivance possibly changed over time I chose to include two other posts: one from before and after her coming out post.

In this thesis I evaluated how Miquela, a virtual influencer and CGI avatar, is perceived by the public and how this perceivance is related to authenticity. I will elaborate on the characteristics of authenticity in this thesis, but it is important to note that its definition has changed from primarily being about ‘being true to your own self’ to no longer necessarily needing a ‘self’ to be true to in order to be authentic, since it is all about the perception of authenticity. Through a combination of both distant reading and close reading a discourse analysis has been

¹⁷ Kimberly Surico, “CGI Influencers Connecting Authentically with Consumers,” Netbase, posted December 20, 2019, <https://www.netbase.com/blog/cgi-influencers/>.

¹⁸ “Bot or not?,” Fullscreen TBH Community, last modified October 26, 2018, http://fullscreen.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Fullscreen_CGI-Influencers_Bot-Or-Not.pdf.

¹⁹ Charles Trepany, “The robot invasion has begun: Meet the computer-generated influencers taking over Instagram,” USA Today, posted December 16, 2019, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/2019/10/16/cgi-influencers-blur-line-between-reality-and-fantasy-instagram-advertising/3790471002/>.

²⁰ Doortje Smithuijsen, “Ontmoet Miquela: de virtuele influencer,” NRC, posted May 7, 2019, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/05/07/zij-is-echt-heel-nep-a1602121>.

²¹ Nora Khan, “Lil Miquela Shows Us the Future of Fame,” Garage Magazine VICE Issue 15, posted September 7, 2018, https://garage.vice.com/en_us/article/wjkbex/lil-miquela-interview.

²² Felix Petty, “What we can learn about the cult of insta-influencers from Lil Miquela,” i-D Vice, posted April 26, 2018, https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/vbxkna/lil-miquela-instagram-influencer.

²³ Paul Donoghue, “Instagram star Miquela Sousa is testing the boundaries of social media authenticity,” ABC: News, updated May 21, 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-21/miquela-sousa-instagram-famous-influencer-cgi-ai/9767932>.

performed of the comments posted on three of Miquela's Instagram posts, before, at and after the event of Miquela's online 'coming out', respectively. The general research question was consequently postulated as follows: *How does the user discourse in the comment section to three of Miquela's Instagram posts, reveal a perception of authenticity towards Miquela as a computer-generated influencer?* With the sub-questions: *With the sub questions: what words do people use in their comments to address Miquela? How do people often express their feelings towards Miquela's existence?* In the theoretical framework different views on and ways of understanding on the concept of authenticity have been discussed. In the methodological section the methods and tools used to analyse social media discourses are described and how the comments for the corpus of this thesis have been selected. In the result section an analysis of the findings is presented. In this section possible links between the theory on authenticity in social media and the theory on physical robots have been evaluated. Main conclusions are presented in the final chapter.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To perform this research, it is important to further set out the theoretical framework of the notion of authenticity. This chapter will provide an overview of the discussion surrounding the notion of authenticity. Firstly, an overview is provided where the understanding of the notion of authenticity comes from, explaining how to recognize different patterns in this understanding and explaining how this is problematic in the social media landscape. In addition to the social understanding of authenticity the concept of perceived authenticity is also addressed and how this is possibly applicable to robots.

2.1 THE DEFINITION OF AUTHENTICITY

There is not one clear definition of what is meant by authenticity, but the most agreed-upon definition is that it broadly refers to what is 'genuine, real and true'.²⁴ Underneath this meaning, authenticity is a concept that has been defined in many and radically different ways across multiple disciplines. As Lionel Trilling, literary critic, explains, authenticity is spoken of so easily and in so many different connections, it might resist all efforts of a definition at all.²⁵ Trilling discusses the concept of authenticity with a philosophical attention, focusing on the moral underpinnings of the concept.²⁶ According to Trilling, sincerity could best be understood as being true in communication to others and authenticity as being true to one's true self.²⁷ It is not just about meaning what you say, but about being one's own and expressing one's true inner self.²⁸ In other words: authenticity would mainly be about being true to your (inner) self, rather than being true to others about yourself. His definition suggests

²⁴ Gunn Enli, "Trust me, I am authentic! Authentic Illusion in Social Media Politics," in *Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*, ed. Bruns et al. (Routledge, 2016), 122.

²⁵ Trilling, Lionel. *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Harvard: University Press, 1972), 11.

²⁶ Notably, Trilling's text dates from 1972. I have chosen to include it in this thesis, since it portrays the basic principles and understanding of the notion of authenticity.

²⁷ Trilling, Lionel. *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Harvard: University Press, 1972), 161.

²⁸ Ibidem, 124, 161.

that authenticity is an inherent quality of a person or object and could not possibly be manufactured or copied. Using this definition Miquela could not possibly be authentic since she is not in the possession of a 'self' to be true to since she does not really exist.²⁹ What is interesting about this definition is that Trilling suggests that authenticity and sincerity are separate phenomena. This could be understood as that one could be sincere, meaning present themselves accurately to the outside world, while simultaneously being understood as inauthentic.

Phillip Vannini and Patrick J. Williams add to this definition that what constitutes authenticity could change as culture changes.³⁰ They distinguish the understanding of authenticity into two notions, namely realistic and social assumptions. The realistic assumption aligns with Trilling's vision of concreteness. In brief; you either are authentic or you are not. The social assumptions of authenticity are less concrete. Authenticity would be a social construct and socially ubiquitous, since it changes across time and space.³¹ Molleda, a professor in journalism and communication, adds to this idea that 'what was authentic a decade ago may lack authenticity today'.³² Similarly, what was considered inauthentic before interactive digital technology arrived and settled, may now be considered original and a genuine and valued reproduction.³³ Instead of being an inherent set of qualities, authenticity would refer to a set of qualities that represents an ideal or exemplar, which people agreed on at a specific time, at a specific place.³⁴ It is depending on practices, expectations and standards. All criteria that are not fixed, but differ per circumstance and situation.³⁵ If what constitutes the ideal of authenticity changes over time, it is possible for a case like Miquela, to become authentic.

2.2 AUTHENTICITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Molleda defines the concept of authenticity as 'real and original'. In his article on authenticity he writes that the constant technological changes of our contemporary society, challenge what nowadays is perceived as authentic. It has become easier to duplicate and harder to assess whether something is authentic or not.³⁶ Miquela, for example, could be interpreted as a copy of a human, since she is neither an original, nor a real human being. She is also proof that it has become harder to distinguish her from the 'real' influencers. Nowadays almost all social media content might have lost some authenticity. According to Kadlac, the amount of various enhancement technologies that are available online, helps us to find and shape a self that we regard as more authentic than our real selves. This 'shaping', as Kadlac calls it, has become more popular than simply being content with the personal status quo of the 'self'. He argues that being authentic equates you to present yourself accurately to the outside

²⁹ She does not exist in human form. She does exist on the internet, but since she is not a real person, she does not possess a 'self'.

³⁰ Phillip Vannini and Patrick J. Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self and Society* (Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 2-3.

³¹ Ibidem. 2-3.

³² Juan-Carlos Molleda, "Construct and Dimensions of Authenticity in Strategic Communication Research," *Anagramas: Rumbos y sentidos de la comunicación* 8, no. 15 (2009): 88.

³³ James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Harvard Business Press, 2007), 15.

³⁴ Vannini and Williams, 3.

³⁵ Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, *Analyzing Narrative Reality* (SAGE Publications, 2009), 135-136.

³⁶ Juan-Carlos Molleda, "Construct and Dimensions of Authenticity in Strategic Communication Research," *Anagramas: Rumbos y sentidos de la comunicación* 8, no. 15 (2009): 88.

James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business review press, 2007), 15.

world.³⁷ The use of tools like FaceTune changes the way you look, making your representation inaccurate and therefore inauthentic. Technology has transformed us into fake-looking real humans. Social-media personalities like the Kardashians often alter their bodies and edit images of themselves so heavily, that CGI characters somehow blend naturally into our feeds.³⁸ According to Gunn Enli, professor in media studies, the obsession with the real and authentic online derives from that media have become increasingly unreal, staged and manipulated, not least as a result of the new technologies.³⁹ Appeals of rawness or staged flaws would appeal authenticity. As mentioned earlier, some perceive Miquela as 'authentic' since she is honest about being 'fake'. Hogendoorn, creative director at design and motion graphic studio PlusOne, explained: 'if something does not pretend to be sincere, you feel less cheated on'.⁴⁰ Hogendoorn uses this as an argument to explain why he thinks a CGI avatar like Miquela would potentially become successful on social media. This is similar to the theory of Kadlac who explains authenticity as a disdain from what is understood as fake.⁴¹ Perfection often appears fake, and imperfection may often help signal authenticity.⁴² While Miquela is arguably 'honest' about being fake, she is still not completely honest since she is not a robot, but instead CGI. The latter means that Brud can make her look exactly how they want her to look. Miquela is portrayed with freckles instead of flawless skin and she often talks about 'personal' issues and struggles that she experiences in the captions of her Instagram posts. If the freckles and personal issues are perceived to be accurate presentation of 'imperfections', Miquela could again be perceived as authentic.

The internet has also extended the criteria for what is perceived as 'authentic' by enabling new ways to create an authentic 'self' online. Gaden and Dumitrica argue that characteristic as personality, connectivity, immediacy, and regularity have become key elements in ascribing someone as authentic or not. Talking about personal details online would be an articulation of your 'real self', therefore being understood as being authentic. Connectivity here is understood as referring acting so that people are able to identify with you. For example, if Miquela goes to Coachella and tags the location of the festival, people that also went to Coachella the sense of intimacy between Miquela and other that also went to the same festival will grow. It creates a sense of intimacy between the subject, in this case Miquela, and the audience. Immediacy and regularity are defined as being about creating a sense of live communication. Behaviour that supports this is by example regularly updating your profile.⁴³ In this understanding Miquela could become authentic as she (or Brud) updates her profile regularly, responds to fans and tags real existing places in the photographs posted on her Instagram. If she is loyal to this scheme, she could create a sense of authenticity, without having an actual self to be true to.

³⁷ Adam Kadlac, "The Challenge of Authenticity: Enhancement and Accurate Self-Presentation," *Journal of applied philosophy* 25, no. 4 (2018): 790-791.

³⁸ Stephen Buetow and Katherina Wallis, "The beauty in perfect imperfection," *Journal of Medical Humanities* 40, no. 3 (2019): 390-394.

³⁹ Gunn Enli, "Trust me, I am authentic! Authentic Illusion in Social Media Politics," in *Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*, ed. Bruns et al. (Routledge, 2016), 122.

⁴⁰ Doortje Smithuijsen, "Ontmoet Miquela: de virtuele influencer," NRC, posted May 7, 2019, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/05/07/zij-is-echt-heel-nep-a1602121>.

⁴¹ Adam Kadlac, "The Challenge of Authenticity: Enhancement and Accurate Self-Presentation," *Journal of applied philosophy* 25, no. 4 (2018): 790-791.

⁴² Amit Bhattacharjee, Alixandra Barasch and Klaus Wertenbroch, "Too Good to be True: Imperfection as a Signal for Authenticity," *SSRN Working Paper Series*, available on <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3233792> (2017), 39.

⁴³ Georgia Gaden and Delia Dumitrica, "The 'real deal': Strategic authenticity, politics and social media," *First Monday* 20, no. 1 (2015).

Some academics argue that if you try to be authentic, you possibly cannot be authentic, or be perceived as such. Gunn Enli talks in his text about the ‘paradox of mediated authenticity’. He calls social media ‘content with an appeal as authentic’, which often portrays ‘ordinary people in seemingly unscripted moments’.⁴⁴ Interesting about his definition is that the content has an ‘appeal’ and the unscripted moments are only ‘seemingly’ unscripted. The author describes how people often try to be authentic. As Maarten Doorman, cultural philosopher, once told De Volkskrant “trying to be authentic always evokes the exact opposite”.⁴⁵ According to Enli, social media, as a form of image-building strategy, is often used to create and construct an image of authenticity online.⁴⁶ The paradox of mediated authenticity is constructed by illusions of authenticity. Enli argues that “although we base nearly all our knowledge about the world and the society in which we live on mediated representations, we remain well aware that the media is constructed, manipulated, and even faked”.⁴⁷ In the case of Miquela, it is not only about how she looks, but also about how she behaves. Miquela’s online appearance highly appeals authentic by looking between human and humanoid. Before April 19, 2018 Miquela was pretending to be something she was not, namely: a real human being. This would mean Miquela was being inauthentic, but she could also be what Burgess and Green call ‘inauthentic authenticity’. Burgess and Green use inauthentic authenticity to refer to the illusion and/or pertinence of being authentic, while not being that exact authentic person or being yourself.⁴⁸ This could be understood as an explicit form of concealment of one’s authenticity. The term would apply to the situation of Miquela before April 19, 2018, since she was pretending to be a ‘real’ human, which she was not. After Miquela’s coming-out, the term would no longer be of use, since she is no longer pretending to be someone or something she is not. After April 19, 2018 we could argue she left her value of authenticity to the perception of the public, making it again a discursive term.

2.3 PERCEIVED AUTHENTICITY

There is a difference between what is authentic and what is perceived as authentic. Something could be perceived as authentic while being inauthentic and vice versa. Turunen explains the concept of perceived authenticity as a construct that is negotiated and interpreted by the consumer. It is an understanding that is generated through personal experiences and interpreted within a certain social context.⁴⁹ This understanding aligns with the definition of authenticity as being a social concept. Judgments of authenticity will always be relative.⁵⁰ According to Gilmore and Pine the distinction between real and fake online characterizes the awareness of and demand for

⁴⁴ Gunn Enli, “Trust me, I am authentic! Authentic Illusion in Social Media Politics,” in *Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*, ed. Bruns et al. (Routledge, 2016), 121.

⁴⁵ Sara Berkeljon, “Authenticiteit is nep,” de Volkskrant, posted February 25, 2012, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/authenticiteit-is-nep~b2ecb9a81/?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>.

⁴⁶ Gunn Enli, “Trust me, I am authentic! Authentic Illusion in Social Media Politics,” in *Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*, ed. Bruns et al. (Routledge, 2016), 121.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 121.

⁴⁸ Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and participatory culture* (John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 21-29.

⁴⁹ Linda Turunen and Lisa Maria, “Perceived Authenticity,” in *Interpretations of Luxury* (Palgrave, Macmillan, Cham, 2017), 121-135.

⁵⁰ Andrew Tolson, “A new authenticity? Communicative practices on YouTube,” in *Self-Mediation: New Media, Citizenship and Civil Selves*, ed. Lilie Chouliaraki (Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 286.

authenticity among today's consumers.⁵¹ They argue that new technologies and associated behaviours have created new forms of communication. Almost all our everyday experiences in today's consumer-oriented society revolve around issues of what is real and what is fake.⁵² Authenticity lies in the eye of the beholder.⁵³ Besides being a social concept, the notion of authenticity is also a relative quality.⁵⁴ What is perceived as authentic and what is not, varies widely. In the case of influencers, Marwick and Boyd argue that authenticity could be described as a shared opinion of an audience that is reflected on the influencer.⁵⁵ Their authenticity is constructed through and ascribed by their audience. The judgment of authenticity is thus depending on what the judging audience deems authentic, sincere and true. In addition to cultural factors, personal factors are also of importance, meaning that everyone could have a slightly different understanding of what they think is authentic and what is not.

The question remains when someone or something is perceived as authentic. Franzese is one academic that conveyed empirical research on authenticity, to find out how people think, feel and speak about the concept.⁵⁶ Eventually being authentic goes back to Trilling's definition, namely someone being true to their 'self'. One's self is composed out of values, beliefs, feelings, identities and so on. According to his research, there are two understandings of what it means to be true to you 'self'. First, it would mean that you live your life with a level of honesty and integrity.⁵⁷ If you tell people that you are kind, while you are not kind, you will be perceived as 'inauthentic' and vice versa. The second understanding is that 'being true to yourself' would mean that you know who you are. Self-perceived authenticity is a private entity that may or may not be reflected in someone's behaviour.⁵⁸ So someone could be authentic, but not be perceived as such by others. This definition implies that it is unobservable to others whether a person is authentic or not since it is almost impossible to know another person's 'true self'. However, people make assessments of another person's authenticity. In the case of a famous person, like by example influencers, it is even harder to determine this 'self', since people do not know this person. According to Moulard et al. the degree of authenticity of a celebrity is commonly defined by the perception that the celebrity behaves according to his or her true self.⁵⁹ Since this 'self' remains unknown to the public, the determination is depending on the judgment of whether the celebrity does something because they want to do it, or whether their actions are attributed to external causes, as by example peer pressure. Moulard argues that this judgment is commonly based on three criteria. First, the behaviour has to be unique to the celebrity. Meaning that their way of acting has to be unique. Secondly, the behaviour has to be highly consistent and thirdly low in distinctiveness, meaning that one's behaviour has to be similar across various situations and similar in reaction to different stimuli.⁶⁰ Presenting yourself as not being human might best be described as being unique behaviour.

⁵¹ James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business review press, 2007), 9.

⁵² Ibidem, 31.

⁵³ Ibidem, 15.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, 15.

⁵⁵ Alice E. Marwick and Danah Boyd, "I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience," *New Media & Society* 13, no. 1 (2010): 124.

⁵⁶ Alexis T. Franzese, "To Thine Own Self Be True?: An Exploration of Authenticity," PhD dissertation (Duke University, 2007), 87.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, 87-90.

⁵⁸ Julie Guidry Moulard, Carolyn Popp Garrity and Dan Hamilton Rice, "What Makes a Human Brand Authentic? Identifying the Antecedents of Celebrity Authenticity," *Psychology and Marketing* 32, no. 2 (2015): 175.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 175.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 175.

After the coming out post, Miquela has always been presented as a robot. After her coming out Miquela kept being consistently honest, sometimes devoting a post regarding her existence as a robot. In this sense, Miquela does meet the requirements of being perceived as authentic.

2.4 AUTHENTICITY AND THE UNCANNY VALLEY

Gilmore and Pine explain that things nowadays are not necessarily inauthentic, because they are fake, but because they are arguably ‘not real enough’.⁶¹ To explain this, they use the example of the robots at Disney World that are portraying animals. According to them, the robots are not necessarily perceived as inauthentic because they are not real animals. Rather, they are judged as inauthentic since they are ‘not robot enough’. This understanding of authenticity matches with the concept of the uncanny valley. The uncanny valley is a term introduced by Japanese mechanics Masahiro Mori. The uncanny valley is a hypothesized relation between the degree of the humanism of an object and the emotional response to such an object or thing. As robots begin to look and act more human-like, people tend to be more comfortable, until the level of comfort leads up to a peak and crashes downwards. When the robots start to appear very close to real humans, but yet not enough to be fully convincing, people will be left visually revolted. This sudden gap is what Mori defined as the uncanny valley. The robots in the example of Gilmore and Pine are not robot nor animal enough to be perceived as authentic – and therefore labeled as ‘inauthentic’. In the case of authenticity and the uncanny valley, this could be translated in the way that before the ‘uncanny valley’ gap, robots would be robot enough to be authentic as a robot, but by example inauthentic as a human. The valley would mean that, by example, Miquela would not be robot, nor human enough to be authentic as one of both. After the valley, when being human is approached, she would be considered authentic as a human. In the case of Miquela this could mean since her facial features look very in between human and humanoid, since she resembles real human features, she is perceived inauthentic as a human, but could be perceived as authentic as a robot.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This study aims to explore the discourse surrounding the perceivance of authenticity of CGI influencer Miquela on her Instagram account @lilmiquela. To discover this discourse, a qualitative discourse analysis was conducted. This chapter explains why this method was chosen for this research, how the corpus for the data set was selected and how it was implemented in this study.

3.1 UNDERSTANDING DISCOURSE

⁶¹ James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business review press, 2007), 15.

The word 'discourse' originates from the Latin word 'discursis', which denotes 'conversation' or 'speech'. Drawing on its early links with traditional sociolinguistics, discourse analysis concerns the study of language use 'above the sentence'.⁶² It is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. The discipline of discourse is commonly defined as that it mainly refers to how language is used by people to make meaning and communicate.⁶³ Discourse analysis is commonly used as a tool to find out how meaning is constructed in spoken or written texts in conjunction with cultural conventions.⁶⁴ There are many versions of discourse analysis. As mentioned in the introduction, discourse is used and understood as described by James Paul Gee: the way people talk about and understand aspects of the world. It is the characteristic way of saying, doing and being.⁶⁵ In essence, a discourse analysis is about asking questions about language, at a given time and place. As Gee explains, it is used to construe the aspects of the situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language.⁶⁶ Discourse is therefore comparable to being a snapshot of a specific time and place. A discourse has no discrete boundaries and could change over time, place and perspective. It is merely a way to understand language.⁶⁷ Meaning is multiple, flexible and tied to culture, meaning that the meanings of words are not stable nor general, but rather multiple and ever-changing, created for and adapted to specific contexts. They are generally integrally linked to specific social and cultural groups.⁶⁸

According to Gee, the methodology of discourse analysis is not an algorithmic procedure or vast set of 'rules' that you should follow 'step-by-linear-step'.⁶⁹ In his book, he introduces so-called 'tools of inquiry', which instead can be used to describe and explain what is to be found of meaning in a specific discourse. The 'tools' of Gee that I will use to analyse the findings in these comments are: the tool of situated meaning, the connection building tool and the fill-in tool.⁷⁰ The words by themselves do not necessarily carry meaning, therefore it is interesting to ask certain questions to unravel the inherent meaning that they carry. The meaning of words can vary across different contexts within discourses. The meaning is depending on the situated meaning in combination with the cultural model it is connected to. Words are associated with situated meaning. An important aspect of word meaning is that we recognize patterns in our experience of the world. This is what Gee explains as the 'situated meaning'. The cultural-models are accountable for the differences in understanding across different social and or cultural situations.⁷¹ The situated meanings are relative to a specific discourse.⁷² This methodology is about asking questions on what the words inherently mean in the given context and what this could mean for the meaning in the text. The connection building tool is about asking questions about the connections that are

⁶² Rick Iedema, "Multimodality, resemiotization: extending the analysis of discourse as multi-semiotic practice," *Visual Communication* 2, no. 1 (2003): 29-57.

⁶³ Henry G. Widdowson, *Discourse Analysis: Oxford Introduction to Language Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁶⁴ Elfriede Fürisch, "In Defense of Textual Analysis: Restoring a challenged method for journalism and media studies," *Journalism Studies* 10, no. 2 (2009): 238-252.

⁶⁵ James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 47.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 92.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, 22.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, 40.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, 6.

⁷⁰ Tools is here put between apostrophes, since it is not an actual tool in the understanding of an actual device of equipment.

⁷¹ James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 44-45.

⁷² Ibidem, 46.

made in a text. The connections or disconnection that are made between words and grammar within a text can tell us more about inherent meanings of texts.⁷³ Lastly, the fill-in tool is about asking questions about the inherent meaning of a text. What knowledge, assumptions or inferences do listeners have to bring to bear for the communication to be clear. This is a 'tool' to look beyond context and see what might also be said without words.

3.2 CORPUS SELECTION

The corpus of this research consists of the comments that were commented underneath three of Miquela's Instagram posts. At the time of writing, Miquela's Instagram account has a total of 731 posts. Each post has an average of approximately 300 comments per post. A few even have over 50.000 comments.⁷⁴ As mentioned in the introduction I have analysed three posts to identify how the public responded to Miquela before, during and after her coming out post of April 19, 2018. The coming out post highlights Miquela's self-awareness. As shortly mentioned in the introduction, this post is a six-page long statement wherein Miquela reveals her true 'identity'. She explains that while she is not a real human, she might still be a person. Miquela's statement addresses the topic of her own realness and authenticity, which will potentially result in comments pertaining to those topics. To see whether and how patterns of words evolve before, during and after her coming out, comments from one post, posted before and after the coming out post had been included. In order to be able to compare the comments of the posts, the posts were of selected of similar contents, that also potentially evoke comments regarding topics the authenticity and realness of Miquela. Arguably the posts that do so are the ones where Miquela is pictured together with a real person.⁷⁵ The combination of Miquela and someone that does exist in real life is an example of how Miquela blurs the lines between truth and fiction (i.e. real and fake). Miquela's Instagram account has a lot of posts including pictures of Miquela together with real humans. I chose to use the ones with the most comments posted underneath them.

The posts that met these requirements are the ones posted on June 9, 2016 and on May 16, 2019. The first is one of the first pots on the account and shows Miquela together with digital artist Molly Soda (@bloatedandalone4evr1993 on Instagram).⁷⁶ At the time of writing, this post has a total of 7.078 comments. It has the caption "Stealing Molly's #TBT but honestly shoulda stole those glasses 🥰🥰🥰". This caption is making the post even more 'real'. TBT stands for 'throwback Thursday' and refers to that the event of Miquela meeting Molly actually happened. In this post Miquela is still 'pretending' to be human. The second post was posted a while after the coming out post. It is a clip that shows Miquela kissing supermodel Bella Hadid.⁷⁷ It has a total of 5.451 comments and bears the caption "I am here. That is my truth. #MYTRUTH #MYCALVINS". The post is not only interesting since it meets the above explained requirements, but also since it hints towards Miquela having a sexuality. The used hashtags reveal that the post is part of the 'Speak my truth' campaign of American fashion house Calvin Klein (hereinafter: CK). The campaign involved different celebrities expressing their true selves in

⁷³ Ibidem, 126.

⁷⁴ This numbers are from the date I collected my data: April 1, 2019.

⁷⁵ Real here refers to 'human'.

⁷⁶ Miquela Sousa (@lilmiquela), Instagram post, June 9, 2016, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BGctgqzMm9r/>.

⁷⁷ Miquela Sousa (@lilmiquela), Instagram post, May 16, 2019, <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bxh4AdrnTel/>.

short video, with the aims to challenge the status quo by embracing authentic self-expressions online.⁷⁸ While it is not an official statement, the caption ‘this is my truth’ hints towards Miquela being queer.⁷⁹ However, this is merely an interpretation.⁸⁰ In this understanding Miquela is again pretending to be something she is not. This time, instead of pretending to be human, she pretends to be queer, or to have a sexuality at all.⁸¹

One day before Miquela’s coming out post of April 19, 2018, the @lilmiquela account was hacked. The hacker posted comments on Miquela’s account, claiming that she was fake, resulting an increase in sudden doubts about Miquela’s authenticity.⁸² The comments on the first post that were posted on April 18, 2018 and thereafter are possibly influenced by the hacking incident. Therefore, these comments were excluded from the corpus. This reduces the number of comments of this post from 7.078 to 4.036 comments. In short, this thesis will analyse a total of 36.857 comments: 4.036 from the post of June 9, 2016; 27.370 comments of April 19, 2018 and 5.451 comments from the post of May 16, 2019. I used the online scraper tool <https://exportcomments.com/> to export the comments. The output of this tool provided an excel sheet overview of the comments posted underneath the above described posts.⁸³

3.3 DISTANT READING: TEXT MINING

As mentioned in the introduction this research is a combination of distant reading and close reading. First text mining was used as a tool for distant reading to be able to see the structure in the text. Then a close reading with the tools of discourse analysis as explained above in this section, was used to understand how words were meant in the specific contexts. Distant reading is well known for its attempt at utilizing big data for literacy studies. It helps to gain a more complete picture of discourse by reading big quantities of texts at once. Since it is impossible to analyse all 36.857 comments by hand, it was decided to first start with distant reading in order to get the best overview of the topics that generally appear throughout the corpus. Text mining is generally defined as the process of extracting useful information from a data set through the identification and exploration of interesting patterns.⁸⁴ Text mining helps to process large amounts of texts and uncover non-obvious and presumable unexpected patterns in language use. Notably, text mining originally is a quantitative method, but as Krippendorff

⁷⁸ Rania Aniftos, “Billie Eilish Speaks Her Truth for Calvin Klein’s #MyTruth Campaign: ‘You Can’t Fake Authenticity’,” Billboard, posted May 9, 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/8510725/billie-eilish-calvin-klein-mytruth-campaign>.

⁷⁹ Queer is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual or are not cisgender. Before this post, Miquela has been in different heterosexual relationships, making it unclear to what sexual preference the post is hinting. Therefore, I have chosen to use this umbrella term, instead of the term ‘gay’. Notably, Bella Hadid has also only had heterosexual relationships.

⁸⁰ The post does not include an official statement of Miquela about her sexual preference, but since all other celebrities that did the campaign ‘revealed’ their truth in their collaborated post, presumably a lot of people might interpret the post as Miquela expressing her sexuality.

⁸¹ Miquela is presented to be a robot. Robots infamously differ from humans in that they do not own human qualities such as emotions or feelings.

⁸² The account was ‘hacked’ by @bermudaisbae, who is another CGI influencer made by Brud. The hacking was all part of a PR set up by Brud to gain more popularity towards Miquela.

⁸³ The scraper tool also scraped information such as the username of the person that posted the comment, the time and date that the comment was posted and the amount of likes the comment received. Since I am only interested in the comments I chose to delete all other information.

⁸⁴ Ronen Feldman and James Sanger, *The Text Mining Handbook: Advanced Approaches in Analyzing Unstructured Data* (Cambridge: University Press, 2006): 1.

argues 'reading texts and counting words does not remove the qualitative nature of texts'.⁸⁵ Text mining and qualitative research are 'epistemologically compatible' since text mining encourages open-mindedness, discourages preconceptions and the process of text mining is very similar to that of content analysis: a tool that is qualitative in essence.⁸⁶ Since I will combine the results of text mining with close reading in the form of discourse analysis, text mining will be used in the qualitative part of this research.

In this thesis I will use the Voyant Tools application to convey the text mining.⁸⁷ The main motivation to use this specific tool is that Voyant Tools offers all basic tools for the visualization of text mining without the requirement of having to know R or other forms of coding. Voyant Tools automatically excludes stop words after processing the language data. Stop words are common filler words, such as prepositions, pronouns and conjunctions. Words with little meaning such as 'and', 'the', 'a' or 'an'. In addition to showing patterns, the application also allows to do searches on specific words. In this research all default settings have been used. Another advantage of Voyant Tools is that it analyses relative frequencies, instead of just raw word counts. The application is both easy to use and accessible for free online on <https://voyant-tools.org/>. Voyant Tools offers different text mining tools. For this thesis the terms tool, the trends tool, the collocates tool and the contexts tool was used. The terms tool is a table view of term frequencies in the entire corpus. This tool was used to render the top hundred most frequent words of the corpus. The trends tool distributes a line graph of the relative frequencies across the corpus. This helps to find occurring trends and patterns. The collocates tool is a table view showing which terms appear more frequently in proximity to keywords across the entire corpus. This tool was used to analyse the most frequent word combinations. The contexts tool will then be used to see in what context those words appear together. At last, the contexts tool shows each occurrence of a keyword with the surrounding texts (the context). This will be used to study more closely how terms are used in different contexts.

To start the analysis, I will use the document terms tool in combination with the 'collocates tool' and the 'contexts tool' to see what topics can be identified and what words fit best in what topics. The top hundred most frequent words were collected with the document terms tool. Through a combination of the collocates tool and the context tool on the top five most common appearing words, topics were generated that could potentially give insights in how people perceive Miquela. Subsequently, through this process I generated 'topics' which were used in the discussion of the findings to structure and further close read the results. My focus was on words that are used most commonly and analyse two things, namely: what words are commonly used to address Miquela's authenticity and what words the public generally use to express their opinion on Miquela's existence and authenticity. Decisions made in the Voyant Tools, such as splitting the corpus, clicking on words or searches for specific words could alter the appearance of the data. Therefore, in the results part the steps made in Voyant Tool have been tracked, to explain the results.

⁸⁵ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (CA: Sage Publication, 2004).

⁸⁶ Chong Ho Yu, Angel Jannasch-Pennell, and Samuel DiGangi, "Compatible between Text Mining and Qualitative Research in the Perspective of Grounded Theory, Content Analysis, and Reliability," *Qualitative Report* 16, no. 3 (2011): 730.

⁸⁷ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, https://voyant-tools.org/?query=robot*&corpus=d69233ee162613051c07f6c5e5309532&view=Contexts.

4. RESULTS

In this section I will present the results from the output of Voyant Tools that I have chosen to further elaborate on in terms of what they might possibly tell us about how people perceive Miquela and the notion of authenticity.⁸⁸

4.1 FINDINGS

Through a combination of the terms-tool, the collocates-tool, and the context-tool, as described above, I analyzed the most commonly appearing words in the corpus. Overall people seemed to either express confusion, positive feedback or negative emotions towards Miquela. By reading the results I divided the word of the terms tool in Voyant Tools into three 'topics' that I expected to be most interesting to explore how these specific topics potentially show us how people perceive Miquela and how this is linked to the above described theories of authenticity.

Topic	Words
Forms of address	Robot; Human; Person;
Positive expressions	Love; Bitch; Queen; Sis; Sorry
Expressions of confusion or discontent	Confused; Omg; Shook; Wtf; Weird

4.2 FORMS OF ADDRESS

The most common word that is used to address Miquela is the word 'robot'. The word is overall used to either describe what Miquela is, what she is not or in sentences that ask questions about who or what Miquela is. Examples are: "you are a robot", "ur (sic) obviously not a robot" or "so are you a robot?".⁸⁹ Striking about those sentences are the common combinations between the human pronoun 'you' and 'robot'. While addressing Miquela as a robot, people seem to be at the same time describe her as 'you'. The general meaning of the word 'you' is linked to a person or human. 'Robot' arguably has the opposite situated meaning. While robots resemble humans in that they are programmed to be able to replicate certain human functions. But robots are programmed, machinal and most of all the opposite of a real human of flesh and blood. Although you can say 'why do you quit' to a mechanical device as for example a vacuum cleaner when it malfunctions, it is not the most commonly used designation. The same applies to robots. The combination of 'you' and 'robot' is therefore paradoxical. When looked at this with the perspective of the 'fill-in-tool' of Gee it is interesting to note that words like 'it' or 'that'

⁸⁸ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?panels=corpusterm%2Ccorpuscollocates%2Ctrends%2Csummary%2Ccontexts&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753>.

⁸⁹ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=robot&docIndex=1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

seem to be absent in those sentences.⁹⁰ In terms of the 'uncanny valley' it could be interpreted as: Miquela is still perceived as a robot, but addressed in human form. Rather, in those comments Miquela is not approached in an 'uncanny' manner, meaning that people do not call her out, or say they think is weird. Rather they tell her that they believe that she is a robot, and that is it. This could mean that for the people that commented those comments, Miquela is positioned in the valley of the uncanny valley, meaning that she is still a robot, nevertheless 'human' enough, or rather 'authentic' enough to be addressed in a regular manner.

The words 'human' and 'person' are similar to 'robot' in that they are used to either describe what Miquela is, what she is not or in sentences that ask or question about who or what Miquela is. 'Human', for example was used in sentences such as "you're still a human to me", "how can you be human".⁹¹ Examples of 'person' are: "is she a person or what", "her insta (sic) looks like a person' or 'you are a fashionable, beautiful person".⁹² If we understand authenticity as what is genuine, real and true; we can conclude that people base their judgments of Miquela's authenticity, on whether they think she a robot or a human.⁹³ In Kadlac's idea of authenticity is equated by whether you present yourself accurately to the outside world, or not. Miquela is presented as a robot, while she is actually CGI. Meaning that she is inaccurately presented online, therefore inauthentic. Nevertheless, the comments that address Miquela as a 'robot' to describe what she is, potentially perceive her as being authentic. Arguably the comments like "you are a robot" or "you are still human to me" agree with how Miquela is presented online, namely: as a robot. 'Still' for example, refers to that nothing has changed, meaning that the perception of Miquela is still the same. Those cases might resemble how you do not necessarily need to be authentic, in order to be perceived as such. This possibly is an example of what Burgess and Green call inauthentic authenticity. Miquela's representation is inauthentic but nevertheless some people tend to perceive this presentation as authentic. The comments wherein 'robot' and 'person' are used to address what Miquela is not, are for example "ur (sic) obviously not a robot". This example includes an expression of disbelief with Miquela's acting as if she is a robot. Therefore, in this example, Miquela is understood as an inauthentic robot. Arguably, the perceivance of Miquela's authenticity seems to be depending on whether she is an actual human or a robot and whether people's understanding of this resembles how she is presented online. While Miquela is presented inaccurately, there are still people that think she indeed is a robot. Trilling originally coined the idea that authenticity and sincerity were divided concepts, whereby authenticity replaced sincerity. Nevertheless, we could argue that it possibly does not necessarily matter whether they think someone is true to their 'self', but rather whether someone presents themselves accurately to the outside world.

⁹⁰ When searching for 'this' in the context tool it shows that 'this' is commonly present in the corpus of post 2, but nevertheless it seems to be used only to refer to the situation as a whole, instead of to Miquela. Foremost, this is probably an example of how people seem to be struggling to address her.

⁹¹ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=%22robot%20like%22~5&docIndex=1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

⁹² Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=person&docId=b3a9eb894c985f6ecf2aaf6e3c0157fa&docId=8340c6b248a29e3f2484fe9c13898a82&docId=00afb6b1ec4caf36461d5b45f14f1ec1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

⁹³ Person is used to overall refer to the same as 'human', therefore I have chosen to combine the two under 'human'.

Secondly striking about the word 'robot' throughout the corpus is that it is commonly collocated with the word 'like'.⁹⁴ 'Like' is a homonym, meaning that it has different meanings. One of those meanings is that of comparison. It is commonly used in this form in sentences as for example "she does look like a robot" or "this is crazy it's like a robot person".⁹⁵ 'Looks like' inherently suggests that Miquela is similar to, but not quite the same as something – or someone in the case of 'robot person'. If Miquela is perceived to be or look similar to a robot, she is arguably understood as being a rip-off, since she is neither human, nor robot. Positioning her somewhere in between both. In terms of the uncanny valley this places her again somewhere in between. If we understand authenticity as explained by Molleda, namely as what is 'real and original', Miquela is perceived as an inauthentic robot, since she is neither enough human, nor robot. Arguably she is not necessarily inauthentic, because she is fake, but rather, as Gilmore and Pine argue, because she is potentially perceived as 'not real enough'.

In terms of changes throughout the corpus the trends-tool shows that the word 'robot' appears increasingly often throughout the corpus, while the words 'human' and 'person' are used increasingly less.⁹⁶ Possibly, this indicates that Miquela is either addressed as a human as robot. The latter is in accordance with the idea that Miquela would be perceived as a robot. What is also notably interesting is that in post 3, Miquela is addressed in a slightly different form of 'robot', namely as 'gay robot'.⁹⁷ Sentences are for example "When a gay robot gets more girls than ur (sic) gay ass does lmfao" or "WE LOVE A GAY ROBOT QUEEN".⁹⁸ They seem to not necessarily question whether robots are able to have sexual feelings, but rather worry what sexuality Miquela prefers. In terms of authenticity we could say that therefore Miquela is perceived as an inauthentic robot, but not inauthentic as described above. Rather Miquela would be inauthentic in that her sexuality does not fit with how she is presented normally, therefore not being authentic. Instead of being dependent on whether she is real or not, it now arguably lies in whether she presents herself accurately. This is accurate to the definition of Kadlac as mentioned above. Notably, throughout the corpus it changes whether 'human' is to be perceived as authentic or 'human' is authentic. In post 1 Miquela is presented as human. The people that address her in this post 1 as being human arguably perceive her as an authentic human, while in post 2 she comes out as being a robot. Making her only authentic to the people that address her as being a robot, instead of being a human.

4.3 POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS

Different words are used throughout the corpus to express positive expressions towards Miquela. The most common word used to express positivity is 'love'. It is used in comments as for example "I love you" or "HUMAN

⁹⁴ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Collocates", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=robot&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=CorpusCollocates>.

⁹⁵ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=%22robot%20like%22~5&docIndex=1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

⁹⁶ See appendix 7.2

⁹⁷ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Collocates", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=gay&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=CorpusCollocates>.

⁹⁸ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, https://voyant-tools.org/?query=%22robot*%20gay%22~5&docIndex=2&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts.

OR NOT WE STILL LOVE YOU”.⁹⁹ “I love you” is an example of how a comment is presenting positive feelings towards Miquela, without mentioning what she is. This comment again includes the human pronoun ‘you’. The comment can therefore be included as either that someone does not care whether or not Miquela is a human or a robot; or that they agree with how she is portrayed online (namely a robot), and her how she is. Love is best defined as the feeling of deep affection towards someone. Specifically, post 2 shows a peak in terms of frequency of the word ‘love’. It is not necessarily odd to express your love towards something, but it is strange to express love towards something that does not actually exist. We should not forget that while Miquela keeps introducing herself as a robot, she instead is CGI meaning that she does not exist in the real world. Miquela in real is not even one person, but a company consisting out of a team, called Brud. In this understanding the word ‘love’ would be expressed towards nothing. By expressing their love towards Miquela they arguably inherently acknowledge that she actually does exist. If then again, authenticity is linked to being ‘real’ Miquela could be perceived as authentic. In the cases where she is addressed as a robot, as an authentic robot, but in the cases where people express that they do not care what she is, she is potentially perceived as her authentic ‘self’, regardless of whether this ‘self’ is a human or robot form.

Secondly interesting in this category is the word ‘sorry’. Sorry appears in comments such as “I’m sorry all this happened to you” or “I’m really sorry and I feel bad for you but I’m confused.”.¹⁰⁰ ‘Sorry’ in these types of comments is used to explain that the commenter feels sorry towards Miquela. In order to feel sorry towards someone, someone has to have certain feelings that you do not want them to feel. Regarding the fill-in-tool of Gee it is interesting to note that in post 2 Miquela not only revealed herself to be a robot, but also expressed that she was experiencing sad feelings over the whole ordeal, saying things like “this has been the hardest week of my life”, “I can’t stop crying” and “I feel like nothing I am or do can ever be valid”.¹⁰¹ By writing that they feel ‘sorry’ towards her, the commenters inherently agree that Miquela experiences those feelings. Instead of saying ‘you can’t feel this, since you’re a robot’, they simply state that they feel sorry for her. In this understanding Miquela would be inauthentic, but nevertheless perceived as authentic. As Gaden and Dumitrica explained sharing personal details about your life would contribute to the overall idea of your perceived authenticity. Arguably, the above-mentioned comments that inherently perceive Miquela’s feelings as ‘real’ do perceive Miquela as authentic. In terms of the uncanny valley this is interesting because robots are regularly not able to have feelings. By accepting Miquela to be an authentic robot, who possesses authentic feelings, they still perceive her as a robot again, while having human features. Again, humanifying Miquela as a robot.

There are also a few words that are used to address Miquela in a positive manner. The words ‘bitch’, ‘sis’ and ‘queen’ are all words used as terms of endearment to friends. While at first sight those words might not seem to be rather positive, they are situated within urban language – which is different than their regular meanings. A ‘bitch’ is best known to be used to address a mean person, specifically a woman, ‘sis’ is short for ‘sister’ and ‘queen’

⁹⁹ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=love&docId=b3a9eb894c985f6ecf2aaf6e3c0157fa&docId=8340c6b248a29e3f2484fe9c13898a82&docId=00afb6b1ec4caf36461d5b45f14f1ec1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

¹⁰⁰ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=sorry&docId=b3a9eb894c985f6ecf2aaf6e3c0157fa&docId=8340c6b248a29e3f2484fe9c13898a82&docId=00afb6b1ec4caf36461d5b45f14f1ec1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

¹⁰¹ See Appendix 7.2

is female royal. In urban language, all of these are words used to address or describe a person for which the speaker commonly feels love or affection.¹⁰² Again these are words that belong in the situated meaning of 'human', rather than 'robot'. By using human pronouns to positively react to Miquela, the commenters again inherently agree with Miquela being a robot. Instead of addressing what she is not, they have chosen to comment something nice, which could also be commented underneath a regular influencers' post. Either the commenters do not care whether Miquela is robot, human or neither; or they agree with the way Miquela is presented, namely as a robot. Thereby possibly perceiving her as an authentic robot, whom they address with human pronouns. The latter is interesting in terms of uncanny valley since it is a possible explanation of how Miquela might be somewhere in between being human and humanoid in terms of what she is, but nevertheless starts to be addresses with human forms. The fact that there are people that are not expressing uncanny feeling towards her.

4.4 EXPRESSIONS OF CONFUSION

The word 'confused' is primarily used in sentences such as "I'm so confused" or "this makes me confused".¹⁰³ In post 1 the confusion is primarily aimed at Miquela's existence, or lack of it. Sentences like "what is she, I'm so confused" or "what are you, I'm so confused".¹⁰⁴ In their 'confusion' people seem to compare her to cartoons and video characters, while debating about her being real or not. This is additional to what is said about 'like' above. Again, whether or Miquela is real seems to be depending on whether she is a robot. In post 2 the confusion is not aimed at specifics, rather used to express confusion in sentences as "I'm so confused" aimed at the situation in general.¹⁰⁵ Notably this is the post where Miquela revealed herself to be a robot. Resulting in that the confusion was generally aimed at the coming out rather than Miquela. In post 3, the confusion was sparked again, this time aimed at both the identity of Miquela in combination with her sexuality with 'confused' commonly appearing in sentences addressed the fact that a "robot" is kissing a human".¹⁰⁶ First of all, what is interesting to note is that people generally will not post comments that spark or express confusion when they assume someone or something is real. The expressions of doubts are therefore to be linked to a possibly inauthentic perceivance of Miquela. Confusion is an emotion that is expressed when someone receives information that does not fit within the information they believe to be true. In terms of the fill-in-tool we already know that Miquela was portrayed as a normal influencer. In all those stages confusion is present, meaning that in all cases it does not matter how Miquela is presented, there is always something to be confused about. 'Shook' has the same situated meaning as

¹⁰² "Sis," Urban Dictionary, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Sis>.

¹⁰³ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=confused&docid=b3a9eb894c985f6ecf2aaf6e3c0157fa&docid=8340c6b248a29e3f2484fe9c13898a82&docid=00afb6b1ec4caf36461d5b45f14f1ec1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

¹⁰⁴ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=confused&docid=b3a9eb894c985f6ecf2aaf6e3c0157fa&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

¹⁰⁵ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=confused&docid=8340c6b248a29e3f2484fe9c13898a82&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

¹⁰⁶ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=confused&docid=00afb6b1ec4caf36461d5b45f14f1ec1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

‘confused’.¹⁰⁷ As Hogendoorn mentioned Miquela is possibly understood as authentic since she is honest about not being real. Nevertheless, still people are confused, meaning that she is not necessarily perceived as authentic nor as inauthentic. Expressions of confusion only add to the idea that they do not know what is happening rather than perceive her as a form of authentic/inauthentic. Notably interesting is that the trend-tool shows that ‘confused’ is used less often throughout the corpus. Meaning that the expression of confusion downgrades as Miquela becomes ‘honest’ about ‘not being real’.¹⁰⁸

‘Wtf’ and ‘weird’ are also used to express confusion, but with a different tone. Comments are for example “wtf is this shit” or “this girl looks weird”.¹⁰⁹ In the latter ‘shit’ refers to either Miquela herself or the situation as a whole (i.e. her coming out as being a robot). In terms of the ‘connection building tool’ of Gee there is arguably an apparent connection between ‘wtf’ used to address confusion and ‘wtf’ used to address a feeling of discontent. While both example comments do not include the word ‘confused’, they can be interpreted as that they are to be used to point out that the writer might not fully understand what is going on. “Wtf is this shit” the writers ask what is going on, indicating that they do not fully understand what is happening. The same applies to ‘weird’. What makes those word choices interesting is that they, besides the expression of confusion, also include an undertone of discontent, or uncanny feelings towards Miquela. Notably, the trends-tool shows that the word ‘confused’ is used less often throughout the corpus, while ‘wtf’ is used less often in post 2 when compared to post 1, but is used more in post 3, when compared to post 2.¹¹⁰ Overall this could mean that people express themselves less with the word ‘confused’. This could be interpreted as that people become less confused as Miquela’s ‘comes out’ as not being human. Notably, as mentioned in the section on forms of address, the word ‘robot’ is used increasingly more often. While the word ‘confused’ is used less, the word ‘robot’ is used more often to address Miquela. Additionally, the word ‘wtf’ also diminishes in frequency when looked at post 2 compared to post 1. ‘Wtf’ is used more often in post 3 when compared to post 2. Notably, in post 3 ‘wtf’ collocates frequently with the words ‘robot’ and ‘lesbian, in comments as for example: “wtf a robot just came out” or “wtf is this shit omg lesbian robot”.¹¹¹ The same applies for the word ‘weird’. Again, people use ‘wtf’ to express discontent in the form of confusion, but rather aim it at the fact that Miquela hint towards having a queer sexuality, rather than at whether she is a robot or not. While this shift is a quantitative result, it is interesting to note that while Miquela becomes ‘open’ about not being real, the word ‘robot’ appears more frequent throughout the corpus, while words used to express confusion (‘confused’) and arguably feelings of discontent (‘wtf’).

¹⁰⁷ Both express that something does not add up to the already established knowledge.

¹⁰⁸ I put this between apostrophes to highlight that Miquela did become honest about not being real, rather she – again - expressed herself as being a robot, while being CGI.

¹⁰⁹ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=wtf&docId=b3a9eb894c985f6ecf2aaf6e3c0157fa&docId=8340c6b248a29e3f2484fe9c13898a82&docId=00afb6b1ec4caf36461d5b45f14f1ec1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts> and https://voyant-tools.org/?query=weird*&docId=b3a9eb894c985f6ecf2aaf6e3c0157fa&docId=8340c6b248a29e3f2484fe9c13898a82&docId=00afb6b1ec4caf36461d5b45f14f1ec1&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts.

¹¹⁰ See appendix 7.3

¹¹¹ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Contexts", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=%22wtf%20robot%22~5&docIndex=2&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Contexts>.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to answer the research question: *How does the user discourse in the comment section of three of Miquela's Instagram posts, reveal a perception of authenticity towards Miquela as a computer-generated influencer?* With the sub-questions: *what words do people use in their comments to address Miquela?* and *How do people often express their feelings towards Miquela's existence?* In the theoretical framework I explored the concept of authenticity. There is not one clear-cut definition of what is understood as authentic. It broadly refers to what is 'genuine, real and true', but it has been defined in many and radically different ways across multiple disciplines. Originally, authenticity would be about being true to oneself. Trilling coined the concept as being separate from sincerity. Where sincerity would be about being true about yourself in communication with others, authenticity would be about being true to oneself. Miquela does not have a self to be true to since she does not exist. Nevertheless, she can be understood as authentic. This thesis focussed on authenticity from the viewpoint of social assumptions, meaning to understand authenticity as being a social construct that could change over time. On social media the notion of authenticity is better to be understood as 'perceived authenticity'. Perceived authenticity means that one could be authentic while being perceived as inauthentic and the other way around. Social media have challenged what is perceived as authentic today. It has become easier for people to duplicate and harder to assess whether someone or something is authentic or not. Miquela could best be understood as a copy of a human being and a representation of a robot. Making her both an inauthentic human and an inauthentic robot in essence. As explained in the theoretical framework almost all social media content has some inauthenticity to it, enabling it for Miquela to blend in. As explained with the quote of Hogendoorn, Miquela might even be perceived as more authentic, since she is honest about not being real. Nevertheless, she is not entirely honest about whom she really is, since she is presented as being a robot, while she is CGI. If we understand authenticity in the vision of Kadijac, we should understand it as being a contempt from 'fake'. Miquela is presented with 'imperfections', which possibly contributes to her authenticity online. But, as explained by the quote of Doorman: "trying to be authentic always evokes the exact opposite". A phenomenon that is introduced by Enli as 'the paradox of mediated authenticity'. Miquela's online appearance and behaviour highly appeal to authenticity by looking in between human and humanoid. Arguably she at first presented herself inaccurately, by pretending to be human and later on by presenting herself inaccurately as a robot, while being CGI. Miquela is an authentic portrayal of something inauthentic, calling her inauthentic authentic. Which goes back to the idea of presenting yourself accurately in communication, the idea sincerity and perceived authenticity. According to Gaden and Dumitrica, key elements of perceived authenticity are the elements of personality, connectivity, immediacy, and regularity. Moulard adds to this the elements of unique behaviour, high consistency and low distinctiveness. Miquela online behaviour arguably meets with those requirements, making it possible for people to perceive her as authentic, while she is inauthentic.

The findings section of this thesis explored the overall findings from the analysis of the comments posted underneath three of Miquela's Instagram posts. By exploring the corpus with the approach of text mining and the tool of Voyant Tools I picked three topics to further analyse, namely the topics: 'forms of address', 'positive expressions' and 'expressions of confusion and discontent'. By analyzing those three topics I found that in general

we could conclude that Miquela is not necessarily perceived as fully authentic nor as fully inauthentic. Rather, the comments show that she is perceived as both or somewhere in-between authentic and inauthentic. In the comments, people seemed to overall express confusion, give positive feedback, or express negative emotions in the form of confusion or discontent. An analysis of the words used to address Miquela showed that words like 'robot', 'human' and 'person' were used to address what Miquela is and what she is not. Therefore, I decided to focus my analysis words used in those three topics. The words that were used to address Miquela arguably showed that while she is presented inaccurately online she is by some perceived as authentic. Arguably, people either perceived her as an authentic human, inauthentic human or inauthentic robot and so on. Trilling originally coined the idea that authenticity and sincerity were divided concepts whereby authenticity replaced sincerity. Nevertheless, we could argue that it possibly does not necessarily matter whether they think someone is true to their 'self' but rather if someone presents themselves accurately to the outside world. Interesting about the words used to address Miquela was that both human and unhuman pronouns were used to address her. In terms of the 'uncanny valley' it could be interpreted as that Miquela is perceived as a robot but addressed in a human form. While being a robot she presumably is 'human' enough or rather 'authentic' enough to be addressed as a human being. The discussion of Miquela's 'realness' seemed to be surrounding the idea of whether she is a human being or a robot. In the first post Miquela is presented as a regular human influencer, while in the last two posts she comes out as being a 'robot'. The words used in the 'positive feedback' topic showed that some people actively empower Miquela in their comments, inherently expressing their beliefs of Miquela being real. The comments that perceive Miquela's feelings as 'real' arguably perceive Miquela as authentic. Not necessarily as being an authentic robot but rather authentic in that she is expressing herself accurately online in how she feels. By expressing their love towards her people arguably acknowledge that she exists. By accepting Miquela to be an authentic robot, who possesses authentic feelings, arguably she is perceived as an authentic robot with human features.

The analysis in this thesis portrays how Miquela is an example of how the notion of authenticity is constructed through and ascribed by the audience. There is not one uniform understanding of what is in general authentic; and it is possible for people to have different viewpoints of someone or somethings level of authenticity. The portrayed examples of comments show that it does not seem to matter whether Miquela is actually authentic in essence, but rather whether she is expresses herself honestly online. Arguably it does not matter if the presentation is authentic on itself but rather whether it is trustworthy and thereby believed to be accurate. In Trilling's definition of authenticity authenticity and sincerity were approached as different entities. Nevertheless, as the examples as explained in this thesis portray, perceived authenticity might not be based on judgments of whether something is authentic in the sense of real and original but rather on whether something or someone is portrayed accurately or at least is believed to be portrayed accurately. Making it possible for someone to be inauthentic, while being perceived as authentic. Usually the perceived authenticity is depending on behavioural characteristics as personality, immediacy, connectivity and honesty. Where inauthenticity is commonly related to someone not presenting themselves accurately in terms of the above-mentioned characteristics, in the case of Miquela. But rather about how real she is online; her authenticity is depending on whether she exists or not.

6. LIMITATIONS

A notable limitation of this thesis will be that I only focused on a small part of the whole corpus. Since I am not common with the practices of coding, I had some struggles in finding the right tool to use for the analysis of the comments. Voyant Tools was a great tool that included an automatic topic rendering system. Nevertheless, the topic tool did not render logical topics, meaning that the words seemed to be put in random categories, which made no sense. Therefore, I eventually chose to divide the topics manually, focusing on what word topics would possibly be the most interesting to further explore through the methods of discourse analysis to eventually say something about the potential perception of authenticity in the discourse of the Instagram comments of Miquela. Because I did this manually, I focused on a small part of the whole corpus. While I did use the text mining tool of Voyant Tools it is very well possible I overlooked some other interesting aspects of the discourse. For further research it might be interesting to look deeper into coding systems that could possibly be used to analyze the corpus as a whole. In addition, it is mentionable that a lot of comments included different variables of words, meaning that words were often written differently than their regular spelling or included typos. While my research approach was not quantitative, I may have overlooked a few comments, since they did come up when I searched for a specific word, since they were written slightly differently. Nevertheless, this research had a qualitative approach and since the corpus consisted of so many comments, it is not necessarily problematic that a few might have been overlooked. Finally, as Gee argues a discourse has no discrete boundaries and could change over time, place and perspective. It is merely a way to understand language. In this thesis, I approached the user discourse of the comments posted underneath three of Miquela's Instagram posts from the perspective of authenticity. I have chosen to only look at three topics and elaborate on how the ideas of authenticity could apply to how certain words were used to either address or ascribe Miquela.

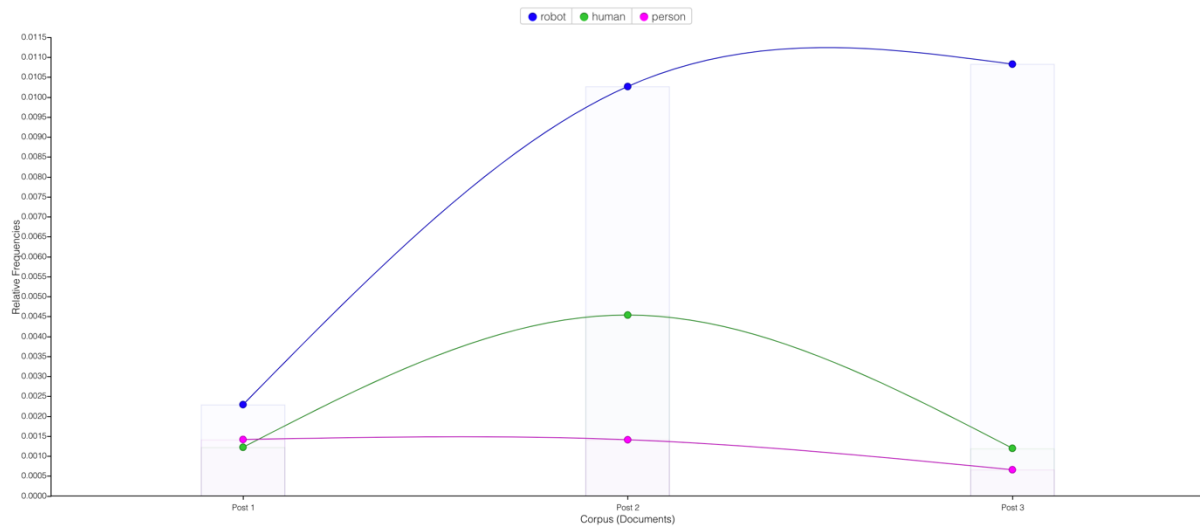
7. APPENDIX

7.1 VOYANT TOOLS TERMS TOP 100 LIST POST 1, POST 2 AND POST 3 ¹¹²

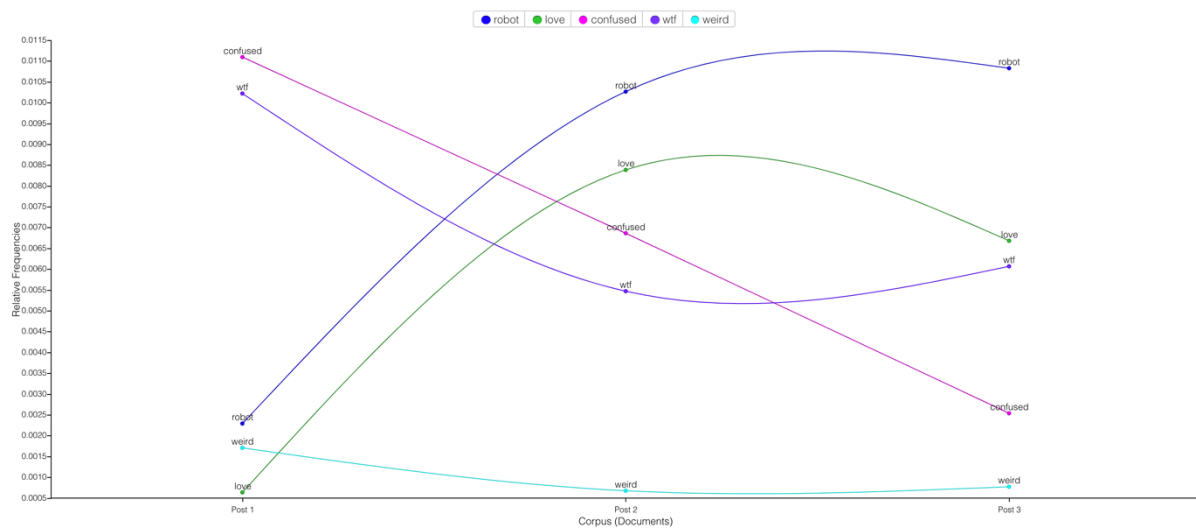
1. robot	35. it's	69. bella
2. love	36. ok	70. thought
3. i'm	37. right	71. you're
4. confused	38. ur	72. damn
5. like	39. feel	73. make
6. wtf	40. wow	74. say
7. just	41. holy	75. ya
8. fuck	42. you're	76. mind
9. omg	43. she's	77. dont
10. im	44. okay	78. life
11. shit	45. account	79. bear
12. human	46. person	80. happening
13. know	47. actual	81. gonna
14. i'm	48. god	82. need
15. shook	49. yes	83. she's
16. oh	50. lilmiquela	84. feelings
17. people	51. it's	85. time
18. knew	52. video	86. weird
19. girl	53. way	87. can't
20. lol	54. sorry	88. understand
21. miquela	55. sis	89. guys
22. robots	56. support	90. ini
23. don't	57. mean	91. la
24. look	58. world	92. bruh
25. fucking	59. matter	93. tell
26. think	60. queen	94. y'all
27. believe	61. live	95. got
28. bitch	62. hell	96. cry
29. lmao	63. gay	97. awkarin
30. going	64. literally	98. story
31. wait	65. tho	99. strong
32. read	66. said	100. want
33. really	67. que	
34. actually	68. tf	

¹¹² Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Terms", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=CorpusTerms>.

7.2 TRENDS TOOL 'ROBOT', 'HUMAN' AND 'PERSON'¹¹³



7.3 TRENDS TOOL 'ROBOT', 'LOVE', 'CONFUSED', 'WTF' AND 'WEIRD'.¹¹⁴



¹¹³ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Trends", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?query=person&query=human&query=robot&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753&view=Trends>.

¹¹⁴ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Trends", Voyant Tools, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/?view=Trends&query=weird&query=wtf&query=confused&query=love&query=robot&chartType=line&labels=true&corpus=5528a0cc8ac33746a13e6e5842706753>.

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