

**Representing Identities.
Intersemiotic and Transmediality in Contemporary Hispanic Cultures**

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The concept of identity is complex, ever changing and integrated by constantly evolving elements. Thus, it is a rather dynamic notion experiencing nonstop development. From that perspective, the circumstances determining the (re)definition of the identity profile –that is to say, the process of its construction, deconstruction and reconstruction– can be identified with:

- 1) the historical and socio-political roots (e.g. history and extreme events, such as the loss of independence and the disappearance of the country from the map);
- 2) the redefinition of the identity during the phase of resumption (e.g. after a period of external influence), which has different connotations in each scope;
- 3) the existence of a socio-cultural and political context facilitating the process of identity reconstruction; or, in other words, the propitious conditions that promote cultural renaissance and play a decisive role in this process, developed through the assumption, re-elaboration and re-expression of significant elements and events in the history and culture of a people;
- 4) the overcoming of the idealistic vision of the nineteenth-century romantic nationalism when rebuilding identity, replaced by greater realism, pragmatism and concreteness, based on a critical analysis of history.

All this becomes even more complex considering the dialectic between ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’, two concepts that refer not only to geographical position but also involve ideological dynamics, socio-political and economic balances, cultural codes that are constantly defined through the tension between the immobility supported by the hegemony of dominant groups (thus, defined ‘majority’) and the dynamism promoted by subordinate groups (identified as ‘minority’).

Therefore, the notion of ‘peripheral’ (that is, a minority group) could be synthesised taking advantage of three paramount aspects (Deleuze & Guattari, 26): the existence and manifestation of collective consciousness; the elaboration of socio-political questions and concerns; the dialectic between its own system (peripheral or minority) and the other system (central or majority), which according to historical contexts can be or can become collaborative, extraneous, tense, conflictive.¹

These relationships are characterised by constant mobility. In fact, both concepts of ‘peripheral’ and ‘minority’ indicate a role that can be temporary; that is to say, the potentially transitory conditions of a group that is excluded from the majority group, regardless of its number, or it is included in a subordinate relationship regarding the mechanism that determines the hegemonic group. Hence, it is a fluid mechanism that is subject to continuous variation, influences the system and can modify it (Deleuze, 251-252, 255).²

¹ This is what Deleuze defines as deterritorialisation and lack of familiarisation through the minority use of the majority language, that is to say, becoming a foreigner within your own language (Deleuze & Guattari). This concept applies to situations of linguistic variation –such as German in Austria, etc.– but it can also be useful for bilingual contexts –such as Catalonia, Belgium, etc. See Angus with regard to the situation in Canada and Noiret concerning the dynamics between national identity and globalisation.

² Deleuze subsequently specified his theory, affirming, for example, that women, children and minors, inhabitants of the South and the Third World, etc. in some contexts are still considered minority groups, although they are very numerous.

Moreover, in the (re)construction of identity, several discursive strategies are used, as well as different and complementary forms of linguistic definition. These discursive forms and strategies reflect five factors (Wodak *et al.*, 31-35): the shared culture (language, religion and popular traditions); the recognition of a territorial body (extension and delimitation, natural space and landscape); the experience of the Other and the elaboration of the *homo nationalis* different from the *homo externus*; the shared political past (myths and their origins); the construction of a common policy. At the same time, taking advantage of language and rhetoric, the discourse on identity reflects three complementary dimensions: the public, the semi-public and private ones.

Therefore, the (re)construction of identity will also be defined especially in cultural production. In order to understand its functioning, it will be necessary to study the context that generates it and the intertext that holds it. In addition, particularly in the dialectic between national identities and global trends, it needs to be stressed that the elements involved, such as cultural peculiarity and universal openness, are complementary factors and they are not opposed or antithetical as they renew intercultural dialogue and consolidate the distinctive identity elements that participate in the process of universalisation. This mechanism feeds both forces, which are revealed to be correlative and interdependent and not alien or contrasting.

Thus, culture, in all its manifestations, reflects these mechanisms and their complexity, whose analysis is essential for the deepening of the topic. These aspects are enriched and strengthened by intersemioticity and transmediality, that is why they are decisive for this research. Indeed, both intersemioticity and transmediality are based on the transmutation between different sign systems as well as on the transmedia narration between different media, which improve the user's fruition by conveying new information. It will then be a question of studying the peculiar identity factors, which characterize the cultural expressions in the contemporary Hispanic context from some fundamental interrelated perspectives.

All this contributes to the development of a convergent culture, that is, the story and the narrated world. In addition, it is precisely the intersemiotic and transmedial approach that allows us to understand that identity elements constantly emerge, evolve, redefine, consolidate and fixate themselves in a certain phase of their expression, until the next stage of their constant and uninterrupted development.

The approach to studying the nature and phenomenology of the identity expression permits the realisation of its analysis articulating it on complementary plans, in order to delineate the iridescent identity profile deeply rooted in the community of reference. In the plural Hispanic field this means taking into consideration the different linguistic cultural components that integrate it, namely the Castilian, Catalan, Galician and Basque. This is the reason why some strategic aspects have been favoured for the framing of the representation of identity according to the intersemiotic and transmedial perspective, which are developed in the contributions collected in this miscellany: the fictionalisation of historical memory as a reflection of identity components; cinema and photography as instruments of transversal identity expression; cultural heritage and social representations of identity identification; the dramatization of identity factors; the role of the historical-literary icons as a synthesis of identity (Federico García Lorca, Max Aub, Luis Buñuel); bilingualism and self-translation.