



University of Trento – Department of Humanities

Ph.D Course “Forms of Cultural Exchange”

Graduate Conference - “Dialoghi sull’identità”

Trento, 5-6-7th April 2022

Palazzo Prodi, via Tommaso Gar 14, Trento (TN)

The concept of identity is widely debated in the academia, representing a fertile ground for dialogue and, more often, conflicts. That is the case when the identity becomes an 'heterodirect' construction, which is neither produced nor projected by the individual, but by an external observer who often turns out to be part of a privileged elite, thus having the faculty to decide precisely "what it should be" (Bauman).

As Todorov stated, Identity means the "discovery that the ego makes of the other". For these reasons, each encounter portrays the unfolding of a different *Weltanschauung*, allowing us to connect only apparently distant disciplinary levels - literature, linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, geography and history.

If those who professed a different creed outside the Roman Empire were automatically labelled as 'barbarians', the discovery of the indigenous populations in America raised new questions about the idea of 'Other' – whether he is human or a God's child, whether is worthy of freedom or belongs to those 'child populations' that are meant to be instructed (and punished) by reason of progress and civilization. The indigenous depicts a *tabula rasa* on which one can pour beliefs, prejudices, and fears.

Between 18th and 19th century, the concept of identity is accompanied first by the notion of tolerance, then by the one of crisis, acquiring a brand new perception: the identity represents something fragmented or not easy to be reconstructed.

More recently, in the 20th century, humanity have witnessed several clashes of identity: The First World War marks the failure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – the supranational state par excellence, which had made its faltering emblem by merging multiple identities.

The Second World War, the great caesura of the twentieth century, was born precisely from such assumptions, which outline – not only in the European context – who deserves to live starting from the racial assumption of *ius sanguinis*.

Finally, in the globalization era, the concept of identity evolves into new clashes under a political, economic and environmental point of view. Therefore, the identity is newly shaped, thus represents at the same time an exclusive and inclusive reality, in line with its creators

themselves, hence generating dualities, such as homogeneity or resistance, contradictions or solidarity, alliances or conflicts.

On that account, the Conference "Dialogues on Identity" welcomes interdisciplinary reflections on the declinations of identity, on the history of the concept itself, on its meanings, on its implications and consequences, intending to give space to different thematic areas.

- ***Imagined identities: history, historiography and culture.*** The main goal for this area is to analyze the cultural tools (from historical-archaeological-anthropological research to historiographical reflection up to literary, diary and memorial production) that have distinguished the Euro-American ways of imagining one's own identity. In particular, we welcome contributions which analyze:
 1. the process of structuring of an identity culture pertaining to a nation state and/or a colonial empire, with particular attention to the phases: a) auroral, b) apical, c) crisis / restructuring;
 2. the strategies of adaptation, appropriation and contestation of the aforementioned strategies of cultural production by the Euro-colonial otherness.
- ***Spoken identities: linguistics.*** The identity, as far as it is associated with the language of a specific community, represents one of the founding *topoi* of sociolinguistics and descriptive/typological approaches. The language shared among the members of the same group concretes the group identity itself, henceforth assuming the traits of self-determination against the society. Based on this dichotomy, we welcome contributions which analyze:
 1. The linguistic diversity and the standard-variety relationship, with particular regard to the analysis of phenomena of variation related to language contact. Works on the protection and enhancement of linguistic identity in minority contexts and the social dynamics behind multilingualism will also be appreciated;
 2. Phenomena of diaphasic / diastratic / diamesic variation, with contributions that investigate the concept of identity as a *trait d'union* between linguistics and sociology concerning the establishment of urban languages and intermodal codes, jargon and slang, in terms of reciprocal and bidirectional influence.
 3. Identity substrates in the literature of migration and post-migration, through contributions aimed at declining the concept of "Multiethnolect" as a literary stylistic function in the European context, in terms of characterization of the works and characters and enhancement of the minority communities represented.
- ***Narrated identities: Italian and foreign literature.*** The concept of identity shapes itself in relation to external factors: in these sense, a mutual confront becomes necessary in order to establish relationships with more general and changing structures which are linked to specific historical, geographical or psychological contexts.

For this reason, in the context of Italian literature, we welcome contributions that aim to clarify in more detail the relationship between identity and social transformations, such as:

1. ethnic communities and migrations: the latest theoretical innovations developed in the context of new critical currents such as cultural and black studies, in their specific contribution regarding the definition of identity in literature;
2. institutional movements: the relationship between personal identities and institutional collective identities as they are configured in the context of modern mass parties and national states and the representation of these relationships in literature;
3. extra-institutional movements: the relationships between personal identity and the great bottom-up movements that have crossed modernity (revolutionary, ecological, feminist, gender, utopian currents).

Furthermore, in the field of foreign literatures, contributions are sought that deepen the different representations and transpositions of the concept of identity in relation to historical and social changes and events, such as:

4. "Mitteleuropean" literature: the reflections on one's own identity, on the validity of one's language, on the strategies for living and surviving within the new metropolitan spatial and temporal structure formulated, in the passage between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, by the Mitteleuropean intellectual who feels traditional reference points disappear;
5. Identity in conflict: the narration, which can take place through any literary genre, of a conflict between identities. Such clashes can occur within single individuals or in a community to which they belong, it can involve temporal nuances (e.g. past vs present) or well-defined geographical boundaries (e.g. East vs West, colony vs motherland, city vs countryside).

- ***Represented identities: performing arts.*** Like literature, the world of art has also faced the issue of identity, trying to clarify it in all its most controversial and contradictory aspects. As for literature, identity can be embodied in a character, or in an idea or in a value, in several other artistic fields, such as cinema, theater and music, there are no well-defined boundaries, but rather it remains fluid. In this sense, the concept of identity is represented in a more daring way, also through original and impacting elements, ontologically extraneous to literary sources. On these basis, we welcome contribution which analyze:

1. The construction of identity through visual and auditory elements between past and present, between tradition and innovation, such as the mask;
2. The construction of identity through a transmedia approach and the hybridization between the different artistic disciplines (cinema, music, theater, dance, architecture and fashion).

Moreover, we will also welcome contributions which in part deviate from the explicitly reported guidelines declining the subject in an original and reasoned way.

In order to apply you are invited to send a short summary of the speech. The abstracts, whose length must not exceed 300 words (excluding title and bibliography) must be sent in .pdf format to: identita22.unitn@gmail.com.

It is also requested a biographical note of the candidate not exceeding 150 words, within the same document.

The file must be renamed with the following formulation: NOME_COGNOME_identità22.

The individual interventions will have a maximum duration of 15 minutes.

Individual speeches can be held in Italian or English.

Deadline for submitting proposals: ~~19/12/2021 ore 12:00h.~~ **NEW DEADLINE: 16/01/2022.**

By the end of January 2022, candidates will be notified of the acceptance per e-mail.

We also foresee a publication of a selection of essays within the themes of the Conference.

Further details will be provided later via e-mail or on the website: <https://webmagazine.unitn.it/evento/lettere/99293/dialoghi-sull-identita>.

For further information, please contact the Organizing Committee via the email address identita22.unitn@gmail.com or check the related web page on the University of Trento website.

The Organizing Committee