UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST
FACULTY OF LETTERS
Alexandra Florina CRĂCIUN

ABSTRACT:

IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION.

INTERDISCIPLINARY MORPHOLOGIES IN POST-/HYPERMODERNITY

After completing my Ph.D. on *Narcissism and the Questions of Reflection*, the scope of my research inquiries continued to be the identity's representations with a special focus on three areas of reflection: (1) self-reflection 'paradoxes' and pathologies, connected to the personality disorder analysed in the doctoral thesis, (2) paradigms of identity construction/deconstruction in processes of communication and (3) personal/collective anamorphosis of representation in post-/hypermodernity. These three research territories converge, actually within a transdisciplinary integrative reading of identity representations in the age of post-/hypermodernity.

Based on critical investigations in the field of literature, visual arts and photography, but also referring to the meta-narratives co-created by users in the field of communication, my research inquiries of the last two decades configure a convergent "mediological" perspective based both on theories of the so-called 'radical thinkers' such as Derrida, Barthes, Deleuze, Foucault, Baudrillard, Serres, Canetti, Debord, Lipovetsky, Debray or Agamben, but also on instruments provided by adjacent disciplines as branding or advertising - areas assimilated by the poststructuralist critique since they polarize nowadays the imaginary of identity's representations, within a universe that blurs the boundaries between art and commercial.

Monographic works such as: the *Small Heterotopy Treatise for a Postmodern User* or *Branding for Star Counters*, briefly described in the first section of the thesis, highlight the way identity crystallizes or dissolves within the aesthetic or corporate discourses; the postmodern rejection of authority rooted in the historical avant-garde provides alternative paradigms of representation; the emergence of new notions such as "post-truth" reshape collective or personal morphologies of the self, in the current world.

The second part of the first section deals with the avatars of identity in a post-/hypermodern context. Terminological determinations of the concepts of postmodernity and hypermodernity, the paradoxical regime of postmodernity, postmodernity as post-time, anamorphoses of representation, post-truth or new law of the third inclusive, aletology and "different" heterotopic systems, a double reflection, the "cooling" system of representation, commercial identifications as collective representations, "total screen" and the "mediological" identities, conversational identity, branding as "opera aperta", consumer projections within an interactive aesthetics - are some of the topics discussed based on publications and researches carried out during the last years.

A special place within these conceptualizations is related to a series of contributions based on the idea that in current communication processes the diegetic model tends to be replaced by a mimetic, experiential paradigm. Based on this idea, special chapters are dedicated to pathological morphologies of the self, highlighting the excesses of representation.

The notions of hypertext and hyperimage are discussed within a new definition of imitation reflected in the structure of the calligram. The chapter entitled "This is not a pipe" refers to Michel Foucault's famous essay on Magritte, demonstrating that the calligram - as a mimetic sign that violates the relationship between visual and verbal - redefines representation as process in the field of art, literature and communication.

The "betrayal of images" is doubled by the "betrayal of words" - discussed in a chapter dedicated to the pathological functions of the author and the reader. *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce becomes in this context - a work without representation, while *Pierre Menard* by Borges converts himself into a stage where the author is abolished. In these extreme versions: the "absolute author" becomes the product of a textual machinery – a "meanderthalltale" (Joyce), while the "absolute reader" turns into an innocent victim of a rewriting that never ends.

The last chapter deals with the hyperimage as a consequence of hyperrepresentation. The conceptual findings are based on the works of the artist of Romanian origin, Ileana Florescu with whom I had the opportunity to work. Reconsidering Barthes's idea of "punctum" and Baudrillard's notion of the "ghostly double", hyperphotographies question the status of representation as *trompe-l'oeil* and the idea that the excess of image can suppress the object swollen by its own tautology.

The second section, entitled *"Identity and representation. Possible scientific, curricular and curatorial developments",* provides insights into the additional paths to deepen and develop the above-mentioned research directions in the context of a further academic career permanently emphasizing the originality of perspectives build within a transdisciplinary

convergence, in the territory of cultural studies. The bibliographic support included in the third section of this paper is a synthesis of the most relevant titles in relation to which this thesis was constituted.