

## Editorial

### Diversity of Identities

In an age dominated by paradigms such as advertising, marketing, brandnaming, promotion, consumerism, multiculturalism, plurality, simulacra, glocalization – paradigms which have been controlling our lives and have influenced our way of thinking since the beginning of this decade -, we, as readers of multimodal texts (Kress, van Leeuwen 1996, 2001, 2006) and as interpreters of a variety of discourses, have been taught to de- and reconstruct identities (political, corporate, social and literary; individual and collective) through fast changes. These dynamic processes envisage: the passage from a micro- to a macrodiscursive level where ideologies (social practices, van Dijk 2000), social representations of actions, and passions are *located*; the rapid shift of social identities into personal ones; the mix of visual and verbal strategies and techniques; the necessity to break fixedness of boundaries because of the intensification of cultural and linguistic diversity, which asks for the study of identities and of the way they are represented within the context of specific situations and practices leading towards power relations.

Interdependence, interconnectivity and relatedness constitute the fundamentals of the construct identified as a plurality of identities. And yet, in spite of the dynamic relations establishing themselves between I – me – the other, and the diversity of such triadic relations when projected onto a spatial and temporal context, there is a framing unity emerging from the *whatness* of culture, whose substance is given by the nature of an I's existence and relationship with it. We consider that the defining of culture through its functions (Duranti 1997) is illustrative of the existence of a diversity of identities (not only of human beings) within a coherent whole: culture versus nature (Boas 1911; Lévi-Strauss 1963); culture as an instrument of knowledge (Goodenough 1957; Frake [1962] 1969; Keesing 1972; Schuman 1987; Boyer 1990, 1993); culture as an instrument of communication (Lévi-Strauss 1965; Leach 1970; Geertz 1973; Lakoff 1987; Silverstein 1993); culture as a system of mediation (Rossi-Landi 1970); culture as a system of practices (Mauss [1935] 1979; Bourdieu 1990); culture as a system of participation (Hymes 1972; Duranti 1997).

Having such functions as a background, we may define one's identity (as the articles in this issue of *CP* show) as a dynamic construct rooted in the historical and cultural context, subject to a continuous process of resignification through two equally important semiotic systems nowadays: language and visual images.

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