



مجلة كلية الآداب بقنا (دورية أكاديمية علمية محكمة)

Roots and Routes: The Paradigms of Cultural Identity in the Writings of Jacques Derrida and Stuart Hall

**Wael Mustafa, Ph.D.
College of Languages and Translation,
Department of English
Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University**

٢٠١٧م

العدد: السابع والأربعون (الجزء الثاني)

English Abstract:

Roots and Routes: The Paradigms of Cultural Identity in the Writings of Jacques Derrida and Stuart Hall

*Journal of Qena Faculty of Arts, South Valley University, Volume (47)
No. (1), 2017.*

Wael Mustafa, Ph.D.

Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University
College of Languages and Translation, Department of English

Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the paradoxical roots and the new routes that constitute the paradigms of cultural identity as manifested in the critical writings of Jacques Derrida and Stuart Hall. Two major paradigms have been discussed and explored: the deconstructive and the discursive. Derrida adopts the deconstructive paradigm of identity that is based on linguistic formulations. Through this deconstructive paradigm, Derrida maps out three new routes: the monolingual, the interdict, the trace and *Différance*. This paradigm lends itself into paradox as it conceives the mono-language, or the mono-identity as composed of several languages or identities. So, there is no stable or pure language or identity. This entails for language and cultural studies the need to rethink beyond the merely constative or formal aspects of language and identity. In turn, Stuart Hall adopts the discursive paradigm that addresses identity processes from historical, social, cultural, and political lenses. This discursive paradigm shows the internally heterogeneous, pluralistic and subversive nature of identity construction. Hall draws four routes in this paradigm: the representational, the dislocational, the local/global, and the postcolonial. The discursive paradigm, as conceived by Hall, is composed of different, dissonant, potentially irreconcilable strands of heterogeneous identity that offer 'new routes' or liminal contours of enunciation and negotiation. Furthermore, the paper elucidates how Hall's discursive paradigm opens a dialogue with Derrida's deconstructive one in constructing linguistic and cultural identity. The paper crystallizes the arguments of Hall and Derrida that the intersection between language and identity arises out of the idea that identity issues cannot acquire meaning outside their systems of signification.

Keywords:

Derrida, Stuart Hall, Identity Paradigms, Deconstruction, discursiveness.

الملخص العربي

جذور ودروب: أطر الهوية الثقافية في كتابات جاك دريدا وستيوارت هول

د/ وائل مصطفى الصاوي مصطفى

جامعة الامام محمد بن سعود الاسلامية

كلية اللغات والترجمة - قسم اللغة الانجليزية

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي الجذور المتناقضة والطرق الجديدة التي تشكل نماذج الهوية الثقافية كما يتجلى في الكتابات النقدية لجاك دريدا وستيوارت هول؛ لذا فإن الدراسة تستكشف نموذجين رئيسيين للهوية الثقافية: النموذج التفكيكي والنموذج البيني؛ فالأول نموذج تبناه جاك دريدا في محاولة لصياغة خطاب تفكيكي للهوية يتخذ من الصياغات اللغوية أساساً؛ ومن خلال هذا النموذج، يرسم دريدا ثلاثة مسارات جديدة للهوية وهي: أحادية اللغة، واللغة المانعة (interdict)، والأثر والاختلاف/الارجاء (Différance)؛ ومن ثم فإن هذا النموذج يبرز المفارقة حيث يفكك مفهوم النقاء اللغوي والثقافي من خلال تصور لغة أو هوية أحادية تتكون من لغات عدة أو هويات مغايرة. لذا، لا توجد لغة أو هوية ثابتة أو نقية؛ ولذلك أصبح لزاماً أن تحاول الدراسات اللغوية والثقافية البحث في جوانب أخرى تتجاوز الأطر البنائية أو الشكلية للغة والهوية؛ على الجانب الآخر، يتبنى ستيوارت هول النموذج البيني للهوية الثقافية الذي يبحث في أطر الهوية من منظور بيني تاريخي واجتماعي وثقافي وسياسي، يبرز الطابع غير المتجانس والتعددي والهدام لتكوين الهوية؛ ومن ثم رسم هول أربعة مسارات لبناء الهوية في هذا النموذج وهي: التمثيلي، والترحالي، والمحلي/العالمي، وما بعد الكولونيالي؛ يتألف ذلك النموذج البيني، كما تصوره هول، من خيوط متفاوتة ومتنافرة غير قابلة للتوافق لهويات غير متجانسة توفر "مسارات جديدة" أو معالم طرق توافقية؛ علاوة على ذلك، توضح الدراسة أن نموذج هول البيني يتلاقى مع نموذج دريدا التفكيكي في بناء الهوية اللغوية والثقافية؛ وتخلص الدراسة إلى بلورة آراء هول ودريدا في أن تلاقي اللغة والهوية ينبع من الفكرة القائلة بأن قضايا الهوية لا دلالة لها خارج الأنظمة الدلالية الخاصة بها.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

دريدا - ستيوارت هول - أطر الهوية - التفكيكية - البينية

Roots and Routes: The Paradigms of Identity in the Writings of Jacques Derrida and Stuart Hall

Wael Mustafa, PhD

*Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University
College of Languages and Translation, Department of English
Email: wmmustafa@imamu.edu.sa*

1. Introduction

The debates around the question of identity has increased to cover several areas such as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, history, psychology, language studies, cultural studies, and literature. As a result, it becomes somewhat problematic with a series of meanings and variations. Identity is a cultural notion that gives scope for thinking about conceptions of subject, meaning and, above all, language. The poststructuralist theory offers postulations and reflections more specifically on language. It puts up discussions around the multiplicity of the subject's character and discourse, as well as the heterogeneity and the hybridity of the produced signification. Such problematisations, in keeping with the historical and sociological perspective of cultural studies, emphasise that language is not just an abstract construct. Rather, critics view language as a mirror of culture in which the human subject identity is determined as a system of linguistic and cultural signification.

This paper delineates how the relation between language and identity is established. Thus, the point of departure of this paper is the hypothesis that language constructs identity as both a signifying cultural practice and a symbolic system. Kathryn Woodward (2014, 23) points out that "Identities are diverse and changing, both in the social contexts in which they are experienced and in the symbolic systems through which we make sense of our own positions". Hence, this paper attempts to explore identity as signifying social and cultural practice subject to the play of language and its symbolic system of signification. It considers the subject, historically and sociologically situated, is a discursive and hybrid figure.

2. Paradoxical Roots

A well-debated issue related to the question of identity signifies the contrast between the essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives. According to Woodward (2014, 47), such debates “underpin the discussion about the various dimensions of identity”. On the one hand, essentialism depends on both trans-historical and biological claims. This perspective focuses on a set of common characteristics shared by the group and does not change over time. Stuart Hall (2012, 3) states that essentialism signals “that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change”. In other words, this essentialist identity assumes that there are no changes and the “*I*” remains the “same” throughout history. The non-essentialist conception, on the other hand, sees the differences and similarities both within the group itself and in the different groups and is subject to change. According to Hall (1992, 277), the non-essentialist perspective of identity “is historically, not biologically defined”. Hall defends this view by exploring “a strategic and positional” perspective by asserting that identities are neither unified nor unique and are increasingly fragmented and fractured in late modernity.

Various studies have increasingly adopted the non-essentialist approach to identity, especially from philosophical, linguistic and cultural perspectives. Accordingly, Jacques Derrida and Stuart Hall postulate that there is no way to understand the formation of identity unrelated to the social, political, cultural and linguistic changes that affect the contemporary world. Consequently, these diverse changes transform the individual’s way of thinking, acting, and positioning the self in language and culture. To ratify this position, the paper has highlighted two major paradigms of identity: *the deconstructive* and *the discursive*. Jacques Derrida has articulated the deconstructive paradigm in three major texts, namely *The Monolingualism of the Other* (1998), *Of Grammatology* (1974), and “Language Is Never Owned: An Interview” (2005). In turn, Stuart Hall has endorsed the discursive paradigm throughout his entire oeuvre. He has contributed to the contemporary post-structuralism and cultural studies, respectively. The significance of this paper is two-fold: first, it shows how the Derridean linguistic formulations can present a deconstructive paradigm of identity. Second, the Derridean deconstructive paradigm of identity can dialogically intersect with Hall’s discursive paradigm of cultural identity, even though each author acts in a very different theoretical terrain.

From this perspective, the paper discusses Derrida’s formulations about the problematics of identity and about the possibility of saying “*I*” in

one language offered by the other. This deconstructive paradigm of identity pertains directly to the deconstruction of the Saussurian sign and to what Derrida calls *trace* and *différance*. This paradigm draws the attention to the fundamental intersection between language and identity. The paper, then, will present Hall's views regarding the discursive paradigm of identity, particularly identity crisis in relation to the fragmentation of cultural landscapes. By so doing, thus, it attempts to launch a dialogue between Derrida's deconstructive paradigm and Hall's discursive one to probe into the conceptualisation around the processes of identification and the problematisation made on the essentialist notion of a fixed and absolute identity. Finally, the paper will delineate the idea of how the construction of identity comes linguistically and culturally under the spell of the system of signification. In so doing, the paper can illuminate the consequences of identity formation on contemporary linguistic and cultural studies.

3. Jacques Derrida: New Routes of Deconstructive Paradigm

In deconstructing Western metaphysics, logocentrism, and the notion of absolute truth, Jacques Derrida has massively contributed to opening new intersected routes concerning language and identity. Derrida (1998, 27) expresses his anxiety about the problem of Francophone outside France, bringing the paradox of identity in a supposedly contradictory sentence that illuminates all his discussions: "*I only speak one language, (and, but, yet) it is not mine*". It is worth observing that the eloquence of this paradox functions as a starting point for the relationship between the identity of the subject and monolingualism.

3.1 The Monolingual Route

From an autobiographical perspective, Derrida declares that the condition of monolingualism inhabits him; it is present in him all the time and everywhere. Nevertheless, this monolingual identity, which he vowed to construct for himself, does not belong to him and will never be his own. This creates a sense of psychic agony that lends itself into an 'identity crisis'. This sense of identity crisis in Derrida's mind emerges from his belief that the language of his passions, desires, and prayers does not belong to him. Thus, the idea of both belonging to and exclusion of the language he possesses entails the presence and the intrusion of the other in the process of identification. Since his "own" language is not his, it has to be the 'language of the other'. The intrusion of the other in the process of identification denies any essentialist claims of purity, originality, or exclusion. Derrida states (1998, 25) that "I have only one language and it is *not mine*; my "*own*"

language is, for me, a language that cannot be assimilated. My language ... is *the language of the other*."

In discussing the momentary loss of French citizenship or colonial origin, Derrida (1998, 90) points effectively to the impossibility of full appropriation of the language, of any language, even of the mother tongue. It is worth saying that there is no language to be made by the "the ego and properly subjective consciousness". When speaking a language, one constructs a narrative, which cannot be identified with a given original and, therefore, transcendental meaning.

3.2 *The Interdict Route*

Derrida states that there is a sense of tragic economy between the "impossibility" of the logical contradiction of what is assumed and the "necessity" of admitting such impossibility. He writes that there "are the intractable traits [*traits intraitables*] of an impossibility, an impossibility so impossible and intractable that it is not far from calling an interdiction to mind" (1998, 9). He adds that identity presents itself both as a necessity and "as impossible-forbidden" (1998, 10). Considering the impossible and the necessary, and the Derridean "autobiographical *anamnesis*," (1998, 19) the historical post-colonial situation in which Algeria lived can be recognised; French is the official language in Algeria where Arabic and Berber languages are present in some tribal contexts. This is because the Algerians came under French colonisation. Algeria, a northern African country from the region known as Maghreb, only became independent after more than a century of colonisation. According to Derrida, French, the language of the colonisers, constitutes what he calls "the interdict". This interdict language has a coercive role upon the interdicted languages of the colonised Algerians, namely, Arabic and Berber. French, the interdict language of the coloniser, constitutes what Derrida calls 'the monolingualism of the other'. The other is the French coloniser who, "operating on the foundation of a repressive sovereignty, demands that the colonised adhere to a single language, against which the colonised is always found to be inferior" (Chow 2014, 23). As a colonised Algerian, Derrida finds himself obliged to admit French his mother tongue with silencing other native languages such as Arabic and Berber. French has shaped him and his monolingual identity. However, the interdict French, paradoxically, has never properly belonged to him as an Algerian for it came from somewhere, 'the Over-there' of the coloniser or the other (1998, 43). In this respect, Hélène Cixous (2005, 84) points out that Derrida "has himself made the portrait of his own foreignness" in conceptualising his being foreigner or outsider to the French language.

For Derrida, through writing, French was at once a forbidding-forbidden language. Derrida (1998, 33) points out that French is forbidding through writing that seeks to “restore the language and believes it is at the same time reinventing it, finally giving it a form (deforming, reforming, and transforming it), making it pay the price of the interdict”. Meanwhile, French is a forbidden language for Derrida because, although it is his mother tongue, he does not properly belong to it. According to Derrida, there is no uniqueness of languages since any language is in constant process of appropriation and re-appropriation. Thus, French, as both a monolingual and mono-cultural other is “a living paradox, an aporia incarnated, at once a host and a hostage” in Derrida’s concept of identity (Abdel-Jaouad 2002, 266). In this respect, Lynne Huffer (2006, 231) points out that Derrida uses the neologism of “*nostalgeria*” to describe his paradoxical quest for identity where “the nostalgic voice of Derrida’s text is subjected to a rigorous, self-referential critique, doubling back on itself in order to ironise its own nostalgic longing”.

The question of monolingualism and the paradoxical quest for identity go beyond the historical question of any country that has passed through the processes of colonisation and decolonisation. The identity constructions of both the colonial subject and the colonial language are at the heart of this impossibility of monolingualism, approached by Derrida. Derrida calls for a deconstruction of the long-held notions of language and subject. The language does not belong since it does not exist as such. The relation of appropriation becomes ex-appropriation and a “place” without origin and without transcendental meaning. Derrida points (1998, 30) out that “the One of a language, which escapes all arithmetic (ac)countability, is never determined”. Accordingly, the “One “of the mono-language will not be “any identity at all” as “mono-language remains incalculable”. Derrida views the process of appropriation as a-never-complete one, if there is no one language; hence there is no absolute sense of identity, either for the language or the speaking subject of that language. Therefore, this linguistic complexity and impossibility result in an identity crisis that is due to the linguistic model centred on the sign and its arbitrary character, proposed by Saussure.

Derrida’s aim in deconstructing the notion of sign is to question the logocentric and phono-centric assumptions of language and culture in Western metaphysics. By so doing, Derrida shows the substantial consequences of the arbitrariness of the Saussurian sign and the impossibility of reaching a fixed signified through its signifier. Thus, the nature of the linguistic sign, centred on the signifier/ signified relationship, is re-appropriated by Derrida, who proposes a deconstructive theorisation from

what he called *Grammatology*. What the critic of the sign comes to show is the impossibility of the transcendental signified and language totality. In language, one does not access the primary or ultimate truth of the subject and its identity. The subject is not in his full consciousness to say “I”. Therefore, Derrida does not only reject the possibility of attaining an absolute signified, but also the metaphysical determinations for seeking truth centred on the *logos* and the *phoné* (the voice). Western classical philosophy has long highly ranked speech, while writing is just an artificial representation, distant from natural and universal truth. Aristotle states that the *phoné* (the voice) is the producer of the primary signifier that has immediate proximity with the states of mind: “spoken words (*ta en te phone*) are the symbols of mental experience (*pathemata tes psyches*) and written words are the symbols of spoken words” (Derrida 1974, 11). Derrida (1974, 34) also criticises the platonic view of language. He states, “The *Phaedrus* denounced writing as the intrusion of an artful technique” and an “eruption of the *outside* within the *inside*, breaching into the interiority of the soul, the living self-presence of the soul within the true *logos*”. It is problematic that the Western tradition has long conceived speech as natural and full in truth to itself while writing as mere convention. From Plato's *Phaedrus*, Derrida has observed the contradictions that allow him to argue that the relation between speech and writing is much more complex and imbricated than classical philosophy.

Both history and metaphysics have established a hierarchical relationship based on the logocentric Manichean binaries between writing and speech. Accordingly, the stigmatisation of the former has given superiority for the latter. Speech has become the signified itself. Saussure takes up the traditional belief that puts writing in the background precisely because one believes in its un-naturality. Thus, Saussure divides the sign into a signifier and a signified. Derrida (1974, 20) prioritises the sound unit of the first as a product of the hierarchy between *phoné* (the voice) and writing. In the origin of signification, there would be a “transcendental signified” manifested through speech. The possibility of a “transcendental” signified would allow the subject to be fully aware of itself and the truth of being as presence. Therefore, he calls into question the possibility of truth as such and of the primary signified given in speech and language.

3.3 Trace and Différance Routes

Derrida (1974, 7) argues about the existence of the “signifier of the signifier,” which has association with what he calls *trace* and *Différance*. This deconstruction of logocentrism indicates that there is a present meaning in the origin of speech. In other words, in criticising the relegation of writing

in relation to the *phoné*, Derrida introduces his notion of *trace*, an inscription that compromises speech and writing in an inevitable way in perspective completely different from the logocentric tradition. Pal Ahluwalia (2010) recognises the importance of Derrida's *différance* route in mapping out his deconstructive paradigm of identity. Ahluwalia (2010, 91) states, "There is probably no clearer place for Derrida's Algerian identity than in his best-known neologism – *différance*". Kristeva reiterates that what she calls "signifying practice" involves both an acceptance and transgression of the transcendental ego and the transcendental signified that constitute the myth of the unified subject. According to Kristeva (1986, 29), the purpose of transgression is to renew the order in which the transcendental subject "is inescapably caught up". What creates this labyrinth of signification is "*the undecidable trace*" that refers to mutiny of signifiers in the absence of the signified. In this signifying labyrinth, the signifier is always referring to another signifier in the absence of a transcendental signified at the origin of signification. Rather, there is always an infinite play between signifiers. Thus, there is no unified subject conscious of itself and its truth. Hence, the claim of an absolute identity is a myth. For Derrida (1974, 66), there is neither an originary presence nor an absolute past: "if the trace refers to an absolute past, it is because it obliges us to think a past that can no longer be understood in the form of a modified presence, as a present-past." Trace is, thus, an infinite labyrinth of signifiers in which there is always an erasure and repetition that mark the novelty. The relation with the past appears transformed, new and without originary presence. The trace, therefore, announces the movement of *différance* – a word coined from the French verb *différer*, which means to *defer* or *postpone* (Cisney 2014, 133-135). This configuration has two dimensions: spatial and temporal. Spatially, this configuration indicates that the sign will always replace another sign; temporally, the presence of the sign is in infinite process of delay within the dynamics of the language.

Consequently, the process of signification runs in the opposite direction to the existence of an absolute and transcendental signified. According to Cisney (2014, 137), Derrida has blurred all Manichean dichotomies of logocentric thought by identifying *Différance* through the formula of "not ... nor" of "presence/ absence", "temporal/ spatial", "active/ passive", "difference/ identity", "self/ other", and "vocal/ inscribed". Derrida, therefore, has developed his notions of difference and trace in a way that serves his views regarding the logic of identity. He blurs the dichotomy between difference and identity. His paradoxical formulations show that the Derridean logic of identity is an uncharted space of difference. Meanwhile, the infinite deciphering and subversion of difference is always in a

continuous game for constructing a new sense of identity. It cannot serve as an originary or absolute principle. In brief, Derrida shows that identity formation, like any other logic or principle, involves difference. Thus, the process of identification is always in a constant play to subvert or betray this same logic of identity by internally displacing, dissolving, and reconstituting itself within this logic. There will be no absolute signified but signifiers of signifiers. In this paradoxical game of signification, all possible meanings are subverted or suspended. The subject, in the process of self-identification, avoid relegating difference to the logic of identity.

Derrida expounds his paradigm to show that the idea of belonging or “dwelling” indicates a subject in the process of identification. Derrida’s paradigm unfolds the sign and the impossibility of a “transcendental signified”. Thus, Derrida emphasises that languages, even being mother tongue, do not allow themselves to be in full appropriation. It is possible to ‘dwell’ in the language but without any full appropriation. The paradox of identity is inherent in a language that one inherits in a non-passive way through transformation, change, or displacement. Such movements provoke a desire for appropriation, even though it is not in full appropriation. Derrida (2005, 101) states, “Even when one has only a single mother tongue, when one is rooted in the place of one’s birth and in one’s language, even then language is not owned”. He (2005, 104) goes to argue, “When one is born into a language, one inherits it because it is there before us, it is older than us, its law precedes us”. This idea of language is a consequence of the disseminating and multiple character of signification. Nevertheless, if meaning is never fully attainable, and if the play of signification is characterised by deferral of presence, this implies again that language does not belong; in other words, one cannot totally claim that s/he “owns” a language although s/he repeatedly and continuously modifies it.

Derrida, therefore, points out to the impossibility of having a given, fixed, or absolute identity and, consequently, to the impossibility of a full identification. For him, this is a result of the disseminating character of language. Therefore, the Derridean notion of ‘identity as *différance*’ alludes to the processes of identification rather than the construction of identity in and through language. Thus, identity construction is subject to the constant play of language. In this respect, Derrida (1998, 28) states that “autobiographical *anamnesis*” gives clues for approaching identification rather than identity. According to Derrida (1998, 28), “an identity is never given, received, or attained; only the interminable and indefinitely phantasmatic process of identification endures”. According to Derrida (1998), identification is a process in flux in which identity formations are in

continuous, unfinished processes, under construction and cannot be attainable in fullness. He, therefore, postulates that the concept of identity presupposes a given, fixed and stable entity. It goes through a deconstructive process from the very moment of perceiving the close relationship between language and the processes that define the subject's identity. In this way, Derrida troubles the distinction between identity as a constative logic and the identification process as a performative play where any claim for full identity comes into question.

In brief, Derrida's deconstructive paradigm approaches identity from linguistic and cultural points of view. Thus, notions such as "one language" or "one identity" should always be performative and productive. This paradigm renders the mono-language or the mono-identity as if there were several languages or identities in this one language or identity. However, this is problematic and complex as there is no language or identity as such. This entails the need to rethink beyond the merely constative or formal aspects of language and identity.

4. Stuart Hall: New Routes of Discursive Paradigm

The Jamaican theorist, Stuart Hall, has contributed to the question of identity from a cultural point of view. Throughout his oeuvre, Hall has thoroughly investigated the relation between culture and identity using the discursive paradigm. Unlike Derrida's deconstructive paradigm that depends heavily on linguistic signs, Hall's addresses identity using historical, social, cultural, and political lenses. Hall gives a full description of the discursive paradigm saying that it attempts at "reintroducing, reintegrating the subjective dimension in a nonholistic, non-unitary way". Through this paradigm, cultural theorists realise that "'the self' is constituted out of and by difference, and remains contradictory, and that cultural forms are, similarly, in that way, never whole, never fully closed or '*sutured*'" (Hall and Grossberg 2005, 145). Hall's discursive postulations explore a supposed "crisis of identity" that affects the individual subject in the present day. According to Hall (1992, 275), the individual subject's sense of the self is less centred and more unstable in the contemporary world. Such a crisis would be the consequence of "the loss of a stable 'sense of self'" or "the dislocation or de-centring of the subject" in a process of "double displacements – decentring individuals both from their place in the social and cultural world, and from themselves". For Hall, therefore, fragmentation occupies the locations of identity and culture that are no longer solid. This argument is questionable at one point. In the very outset, Hall raises questions about changes in the conceptualisation of the subject throughout

history. He (1992, 274) marks the way in which identity constructions “arise from our ‘belonging’ to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and, above all, national cultures”. The formation of such constructions has occurred over the years.

Hall's (1992) proposition differentiates three conceptions of identity and their evolution in time: “the Enlightenment subject”, “the sociological subject”, and “the postmodern subject”. The constructions of these subjects, in general terms, pertain respectively to the idea of unity, interaction and fragmentation. The “Enlightenment subject” is the conception of the person as a fully centred, unified, and unchanging individual, whose “essential centre of the self was a person identity”; it is also referred to as “modern subject” and philosophically as “Cartesian subject” (1992, 275, 281, 282). According to Hall (1992), this subject emerges from the rupture with the theocentric worldview; it produces the idea of an absolute fixed, coherent, and stable individual. The sociological subject reflects the complexity of the modern world as it involves the interaction with “significant others” and mediates the relationship with the world. This view gives rise to the “classic sociological conception” and the relation of the individual to the “outside” world and to other identities (1992, 275-276). Finally, the “postmodern subject” assumes new discursive formations that decentre the subject from his/ her stable place and shake his/ her identity. It corresponds to the individual with no fixed or absolute identity. Identities are in a constant process of fragmentation and dislocation. Thus, the subject becomes composed of multiple identities. This type entails that the centred and unified subject is utopian. It advances the systems of signification and cultural representation, making identities multiple and diverse. In this regard, Hall (1992, 285) proposes four routes for his discursive paradigm that render cultural identity fragmented “through a series of ruptures in the discourses of modern knowledge”.

4.1 The Representational Route

The representational route that characterises Hall's (2003, 18) discursive paradigm conceives culture as “shared meanings or shared conceptual maps”. This route semiotically views culture as a system of signification that gives meaning to the social world. From the moment of birth, individuals acquire all accumulated experiences and knowledge from their interaction with others. Through culture, individuals give meaning to the society in which they live. Identities are constructions produced within the discursive paradigm “of marking difference and exclusion” (Hall 2012, 4). This indicates the diversity of Hall's discursive paradigm with its unique

characteristics of distinction and exclusion. This route reveals itself through multiple constructions of values, codes and discursive practices shared by all subjects. Thus, people organise themselves into groups with common features or characteristics. This union or interaction foregrounds the concept of collective identity. According to Hall (2012, 3), identity is a representational signifying practice that “is subject to the ‘play’, of *différance*. It obeys the logic of more-than-one”. It operates across difference that “entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of ‘frontier-effects’”

Reflecting on the Lacanian “mirror phase”, Hall believes that identity construction occurs at an early age through the process of differentiation. It occurs when the child recognises his image, identifies with it and becomes aware that it is distinct from the mother’s image. From that time on, the process of other identifications starts. It is by the internalisation of the external visions of oneself that one acquires the perception of identity. This route reveals itself as a path to the identification of the subject who recognises “some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal” (Hall 2012, 2). Therefore, identification is always incomplete and under construction. It is “a process of articulation, a suturing, an overdetermination, not a subsumption” (Hall 2012, 3). Identity operates through *différance* and involves the closing and marking of symbolic boundaries. From this analysis, Hall (2012) rejects the rigidity of binary oppositions in favour of dynamicity in characterising identity. He (2012, 4) argues that identity is not something entirely complete and is always in the process of transformation; it is a “process of becoming rather than being”.

The representational route involves national roots that identify nationalism and the feeling of belonging of an individual to a nation. According to Hall (1992, 292), national identities are not something inherent to the human being. Rather, they involve formation and transformation “within and in relation to *representation*”. Thus, national identities are discursive representations formed historically not biologically. This representational route of cultural identity comprises a set of meanings of the national culture that, in turn, acts as a source of cultural meanings. With the concept of “nation” as a “system of cultural representation”, the individual forms his/her identity. This national identity, Hall (1992, 292-293) argues, “is a *discourse* - a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our actions and our conception of ourselves. The idea of nation is a phenomenon that arises in Europe, “as an ideology and movement”, at late eighteenth century (Smith 2005, 11). National identities hold “the idea of

populations being divided by ‘national character’ and possessing a common identity” (Smith 2005, 11). However, there are distinctions among national communities in which individuals have a common origin or identity and share the same culture.

4.2 *The Dislocational Route*

In constructing the discursive paradigm of identity, Hall identifies the dislocational route with five ruptures or decentralising contours that displace the conception of identity in the postmodern discourse. Although this route presents a distinct theoretical and conceptual engagement, its implications converge towards the same direction, that is, the decentring of the Cartesian subject.

Initially, Hall (1992) highlights the legacy of Marx as the first decentralising contour. Marxist thought has reinterpreted the role of the subject. Individuals are not authors or agents of history because their actions would be bound to historical conditions created by others. The second contour concerns the Freudian discovery of the unconscious that troubles the notion of a completely rational subject endowed with a unified identity. The Lacanian reading of the Freudian implications substantiates the idea of the divided subject. Accordingly, identity remains incomplete and in constant process of becoming. The third decentring contour pertains to the Saussurian structural linguistics that denies any authority of the subjects over their language because language is a social not individual system. In expressing themselves, individuals bring a variety of meanings that are already part of the language and cultural systems. This contour opens a space of non-fixity and relationality for the meanings of words. Remarkably, this contour presents crossroads at which Hall and Derrida come into intellectual contact zone; by drawing this contour, Hall (1992) refers precisely to the questions posed by Derrida about the Saussurian sign and the impossibility of having a fixed and ultimate significance. Consequently, in the process of signification, identity has no closure as it runs through constant deferral. The fourth contour corresponds to Foucauldian notion of the “genealogy of the modern subject as a historical and cultural reality” (Foucault and Sennett 1982, 9). Foucault highlights the “disciplinary power” and control of the human being. In the late modernity, this Foucauldian contour problematises the way modern institutions guard the human species and the individual. Paradoxically, although this disciplinary power constitutes itself as “the product of the new large-scale regulating *collective* institutions”, it ends up individualising the subject even more” (Hall 1992, 289). Finally, the fifth contour with its feminist and subaltern dimensions have broadened the

discussion about political and social aspects of Hall's paradigm. Feminist thought has attenuated the previously polarised differences by bringing up new segments of differentiation such as sexual and gender identities. This contour has contributed to stir up the problematic of "identity politics" (Hall 1992, 290).

In brief, the dislocational route with its five decentring contours maps out the 'conceptual shifts' of the subject from the Enlightenment subject to the postmodern subject. Throughout these contours, identities are not fixed and stable but "opened, contradictory, unfinished, fragmented" ones (Hall 1992, 291). In Hall's contention, with postmodernity, these contours have led to the destabilisation of identity and, thus, put the concept of a fragmented and plural individual under discussion. This route has questioned established values and allowed new subject roles to emerge and restructure the social identity.

4.3 The Local/ Global Route

Hall's (1992) discursive paradigm of identity has produced the local/global route. The local contour of this route forms a sense of belonging to a group that shares a specific cultural set. This local contour is a cultural set given "to cultural features - language, religion, custom, traditions, feelings of 'place' - which are shared by a people" (Hall 1992, 297). It has two lines that aptly categorise the national quality of cultural identity. The first line attempts to recover a common history and culture that serves to reaffirm identity; and the other does not deny the past, but transforms and reconstruct it. According to Hall (1990, 225-226), the second line goes beyond the "mere 'recovery' of the past". It entails what Hall calls the "politics of position" with "no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'". This seems to be the most elaborate and appropriate to the postmodern context, for by endowing cultural identity with a new route, it still has connection to the old roots.

Hall (1992) distinguishes three global lines that diverge away from the local contour. The first is the homogenising line that maps out local identities as disintegrating. It challenges the established lines of the local contour "to expose its closures to the pressures of difference, 'otherness' and cultural diversity" (1992, 307). The second is the defensive line that constitutes a counterpoint of the first line to reinforce the local by resisting the global. This line "is sometimes matched by a strategic retreat to more defensive identities [...] in response to the experience of cultural racism and exclusion" (Hall 1992, 308). Hall (1992, 308) identifies three strategic retreat

points in this line to the local contour: “re-identification with cultures of origin”, “the construction of strong counter-ethnicities” and “the revival of cultural traditionalism, religious orthodoxy and political separatism”. Finally, the third is the hybrid line that oscillates between the local and global contours by allowing new mixed identities to emerge. This line shows the local and the global contours are “inextricably articulated or knitted together in different identities” as “the one never wholly obliterating the other” (Hall 1992, 309). Illuminating these three lines of the global contour, Woodward (2014, 16) points out that the homogenising line can “lead to the detachment of identity from community and place”; the defensive can “lead to resistance, which could strengthen and reaffirm some national and local identities”; finally, the hybrid can “lead to the emergence of new identity positions”.

The third line of the global contour has foregrounded cultural hybridity as a subversive force. Such a force affects both the local and the global contours of identity formations in the postcolonial context. The global contour, thus, has “the effect of contesting and dislocating the centred and ‘closed’ identities” of the local contour (Hall 1992, 309). Along with its three lines, the global contour transforms, contaminate and mixes with the allegedly pure local contour to create new hybrid identities. It is impossible, thus, to have a single pure local identity. The new hybrid identity establishes the political as well as the situational and conjunctural character of identity formation in specific times and places and reveals the coexistence of the local and global. Along the global contour, the subjects of identification transit between varied lines and points and assume different representations, roles, or positions with which they can identify within the social sphere. According to Hall (1992), the global contour will not destroy local identities; instead, it will bring together new hybrid forms of global and local identifications. In this way, identities become diverse and plural.

4.4 The Postcolonial Route

The postcolonial route intersects with the local/global route of identity. Hall identifies this route as a rereading or reinterpretation of colonisation to transcend both national and historical boundaries that essentialise the subject of identity. For Hall (2001), this route “re-reads ‘colonisation’ as part of an essentially transnational and transcultural ‘global’ process”. Hall (2001, 247) draws two interrelated contours for this route: the diasporic or the migratory and the hybrid. Through these two contours, the postcolonial route “produces a decentred, diasporic or ‘global’ rewriting of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives”. Furthermore, Hall explains that there are no significant changes in the postcolonial route; however, there

is only an exchange of power. This route, says Hall (2000, 213), “marks the passage from one historical power-configuration or conjuncture to another”; the uneven power relations of the colonisation have gone through processes of restaging and displacement between the local, with its indigenous culture, and the global, with its hybrid culture. Therefore, the discursive paradigm explains how the displacements and dislocations affect the identity formation in the postcolonial route. Hall (2000) asserts that the diasporic and the hybrid contours of the postcolonial route have produced culturally in-between identities, formed by an immense range of heterogeneous cultures. In this respect, Hall “draws upon the Derridean notion of *différance* [...] to describe the heterogeneous nature of diasporic identities” (Edwards 2008, 157).

The diasporic contour maps out the subject of identification as an individual, divided between particularistic statements and the modern transnationalities. This creates a sense of hybridity generated by experiences of migration and ancestral territorial displacements that end up redefining cultural identification. According to Hall (2005), three lines characterise this contour. They have critical points that resonate differently, both in political struggles and in epistemological issues. They reflect the epistemological ruptures in the history of ideas and the breakdown of paradigms in relation to race and culture. The first line displaces European models of high culture. The hegemonic shift in defining culture characterises the second line. The third line features the process of decolonisation. These lines open “new spaces of contestation” and create “a momentous shift in the high culture” (Hall 2005, 468-69). The diasporic contour has the capacity to “subvert and “translate”, to negotiate and indigenise the global cultural onslaught on weaker cultures” (Hall 2016, 57). Therefore, it shows that the local and the global contours cannot claim purity or fixity. This is a form of resistance to the homogenising culture, but without denying its presence. This contour rejects homogenisation with its sense of closure and isolation. Rather, it seeks to approach cultural diversity. It recognises similarities and contrasts that may lead to significant changes. Thus, the diasporic identity does not “cling to closed, unitary, homogenous models of ‘cultural belonging’”; but rather, it seeks, Hall (2016, 58) argues, “to embrace the wider processes – the play of similarity and difference – which is transforming culture world-wide”.

The hybrid contour manifests itself in the process of cultural translation. It strengthens local identities, resulting in the crossing of various histories and cultures. The subjects of identification are characterised as hybrid. Thus, the hybrid subjects, says Hall (1992, 310), “must learn to inhabit at least two identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them”. Hall draws an overlapping point at which the

diasporic and the hybrid intersect. The diasporic subjects who have remained away from their homeland know that it is not possible to return to the past. However, they seek to integrate into and negotiate with the new culture without having to give up their tradition, history and language – elements that constitute identity. This mobility and fragmentation of diasporic identities are determining factors for rethinking and reflecting on the concept of nation and national identity. The constant displacements, caused mainly by globalisation, amplify cultural heterogeneity. These cultural exchanges contribute to creating new hybrid identities.

The hybrid contour lends itself to “an agonistic process” of cultural translation, that is “never settled and complete, but is always “in transition”, in translation, marked by an ultimate undecidability” (Hall 2016, 50). It overlaps with Bhabha’s notion of cultural translation. According to Bhabha (2000, 141), cultural translation “is not simply appropriation or adaptation; it is a process through which cultures are required to revise their own systems of reference, norms and values, by departing from their habitual or ‘inbred’ rules of transformation”. Furthermore, Bhabha (1994) grasps the role played by cultural translation in identity formation. He (1994, 235) points out that “the act of cultural translation works through ‘the *continua* of transformation’ to yield a sense of culture’s belonging”. In the same vein, Hall (2001, 247) reiterates the idea of cultural translation as constituting factor in identity formation. He explains that cultural translation creates in the individual a form of “double inscription” that allows crossing between different cultures, “breaking down the clearly demarcated inside/ outside of the colonial system”. The act of cultural translation doubly inscribes cultural identities that “cut across and intersect natural frontiers, and which are composed of people who have been dispersed forever from their homelands” (Hall 1992, 310). In the process of cultural translation, there is no nostalgic impulse for returning to the past. The subjects has to negotiate with their own culture. They identify themselves with traces of their original identities such as language, customs, traditions, preventing the homogenising assimilation of the other culture.

Hall (1992, 277) foregrounds this postcolonial route of identity with its two contours. He states that the postcolonial subject can assume different identities that “are not unified around a coherent ‘self’”. In addition, contradictory identities impel to various directions, shifting the identifications. This creates a situation of displacement and destabilisation of identity that allows new identity reconfigurations to emerge. Hall demonstrates the instability of identity by challenging the notion of an integrated and unified subject. This displacement of identity produces the

crisis of identity. Hall (2016, 56) argues that the postcolonial route and its contours are “changing the composition, diversifying the cultures and pluralising the cultural identities of the old dominant nation-states, the old imperial powers, and indeed of the globe itself”. Therefore, the cultural contact does not take place in a peaceful way, since, in most cases, it involves conflicts that make establishing an identity difficult.

5. RECAPITULATIONS

From a Derridean deconstructive point of view, despite the interesting routes and contours that Hall brings forth in mapping out the paradigms of cultural identity, his notion of cultural identity turns out to be somewhat essentialist. He admits that the locations of identity and culture are no longer fixed, just as the subject comes to be conceived as fragmented and, therefore, that identity, once solid, is now in crisis. To assert that identity processes were a *priori* stable constructions, is to consider that at some point the individual subject was fully aware of itself and its truth. It is apparent that Hall converges with Derrida's thinking in establishing a bridge or a contact zone between language and identity. Hall (1992, 281) points out that the human subject is seen as “a discursive figure” with “unified form and rational identity”. Epistemologically, Hall's approach probes into the impossibility of the fixed and absolute conception of identity, as well as into ratifying the question of the differential character of the language, as proposed by Derrida.

Furthermore, Hall's paradigms are more discursive and interdisciplinary than those proposed by Derrida. In accounting for the paradigms of cultural identity, Hall investigates the construction of identity issue from various disciplinary areas. Faced with so many critiques and theorisations about cultural identity, Hall shows that the concept of identity is not exhaustive despite the cornucopia of studies discussing the matter. Quoting Derrida, Hall (2012) highlights the Derridean deconstructive concept of “thinking at the limit” or “thinking in the interval” between old concepts and displacements that emerge around the subject. In other words, there is no complete obliteration of old notions but “reversal and emergence” occupy the same theoretical space in certain moments. Thus, identity “cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all” (Hall 2012, 2). Pointing to the intersection between Derrida's views of identity and those of Hall, Pal Ahluwalia (2010, 91) states that “it is *différance* and its relevance to the issue of identity that most implicates Derrida, the historical being, in his theory. This becomes illuminated in the use Stuart Hall makes of the concept”.

Derridean paradigms and contours of identity imply the close relationship between language and identity. Under this same perspective, Hall points to the conception of identity as a practice of signification submitted to the game of *différance*, that is, the processes of identification are continuous and never definitively complete. He (2012) argues that the subject is not stable and is always subject to the various historical changes. His paradigm and contours are “never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (Hall 2012, 4). From this view, the processes of identity formation are discursive constructions produced through difference and through the relationship with the other. Summing up, the identity paradigms of Derrida and Hall are in a continuous dialogue that reflects on important aspects of language and culture. Considering the processes of cultural identification that occur through linguistic practices, one can notice various implications and consequences relevant to both cultural and language studies. Derrida and Hall adopt the same approach towards language and culture but with different paradigms and contours. The implications of this convergence reinforce that language is not an abstract construct and that it does not exist independently of culture. Above all, language and culture are tools used by a human subject whose identity is a system of signification.

Works Cited

- Abdel-Jaouad, H., 2002. Derrida's Algerian *anamnesis*; or autobiography in the language of the other. In E. Mudimbe-Boyi, ed. *Remembering Africa. Studies in African literature*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, pp. 245–279.
- Ahluwalia, P., 2010. *Out of Africa: Post-structuralism's colonial root*, London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H.K., 1994. *Location of culture*, London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H.K., 2000. The vernacular cosmopolitan. In F. Dennis & N. Khan, eds. *Voices of the crossing: the impact of Britain on writers from Asia, the Caribbean and Africa*. London: Serpents Tail, pp. 133–142.
- Chow, R., 2014. *Not like a native speaker: On languaging as a postcolonial experience*, NY: Columbia UP.
- Cisney, V.W., 2014. *Derrida's voice and phenomenon*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.
- Cixous H. & Calle-Gruber, M., 2005. *Helene Cixous, rootprints: memory and life writing*, London: Routledge.
- Derrida, J., 1974. *Of grammatology*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP.
- Derrida, J., 1998. *The monolingualism of the other: the prosthesis of origin*, Stanford: Stanford UP.
- Derrida, J., 2005. Language is never owned: an interview. In O. Pasanen & T. Dutoit, eds. *Sovereignties in question: the poetics of Paul Celan/ Jacques Derrida*. NY: Fordham UP, pp. 97–107.
- Edwards, J.D., 2008. *Postcolonial literature*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. & Sennett, R., 1982. Sexuality and solitude. In D. Rieff, ed. *Humanities in review*. Cambridge: New York Institute for the Humanities, pp. 3–21.

- Hall, S., 1990. Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford, ed. *Identity: community, culture, difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 222–237.
- Hall, S., 1992. The question of cultural identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & A. G. McGrew, eds. *Modernity and its futures*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 274–316.
- Hall, S., 2000. Conclusion: the multi-cultural question. In B. Hesse, ed. *Un/settled multiculturalisms: diasporas, entanglements, transruptions*. London: Zed, pp. 209–241.
- Hall, S., 2001. When was ‘the post-colonial’? Thinking at the limit. In I. Chambers & L. Curtis, eds. *The post-colonial question: common skies, divided horizons*. London: Routledge, pp. 242–260.
- Hall, S., 2003. The work of representation. In *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage, pp. 13–74.
- Hall, S., 2005. What is this ‘black’ in black popular culture? In D. Morley & K.-H. Chen, eds. *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 468–478.
- Hall, S., 2012. Who needs ‘identity’? In S. Hall & P. D. Gay, eds. *Questions of cultural identity*. London: Sage, pp. 2–17.
- Hall, S., 2016. Diasporas, or the logics of cultural translation. *MATRIZES*, 10(3), pp.47–58.
- Hall, S. & Grossberg, L., 2005. On postmodernism and articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall. In D. Morley & K.-H. Chen, eds. *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 131–150.
- Huffer, L., 2006. Derrida’s *nostalgeria*. In P. Lorcin, ed. *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: identity, memory, nostalgia*. NY: Syracuse UP, pp. 228–246.
- Kristeva, J., 1986. The system and the speaking subject. In T. Moi, ed. *The Kristeva reader: Julia Kristeva*. NY: Columbia UP, pp. 24–33.
- Saussure, F.de, 2016. *Course in general linguistics*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Smith, A.D., 2005. *The ethnic origins of nations*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Woodward, K., 2014. *Identity and difference*, London: Sage.