

**Carte Semiotiche 2023**

## **Scene della nostalgia**



la casa  
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Carte Semiotiche  
*Annali 9*

# Carte Semiotiche

Rivista Internazionale di Semiotica e Teoria dell'Immagine  
Annali 9 - Giugno 2023

## Scene della nostalgia

A cura di  
Mario Panico

SCRITTI DI  
BOERO, BUSI RIZZI, DE LUCA,  
LOBACCARO, MORENO, PEZZINI, PILUSO, POLIDORO,  
PONZO, PORTELLO, POZZATO

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Rivista Internazionale di Semiotica e Teoria dell'Immagine  
Fondata da Omar Calabrese  
Serie Annali 9 - Giugno 2023

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ISSN: 2281-0757

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50122 Firenze  
Tel. +39/055/2302873  
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«Carte Semiotiche», fin dalla sua nascita nel 1984 per iniziativa di Omar Calabrese, si propone di gettare uno sguardo, il più possibile coerente e coeso, su ciò che avviene nella realtà contemporanea, traguardandone gli aspetti più originali e innovativi, senza dimenticare il necessario confronto con il nostro passato prossimo e remoto. È con lo stesso spirito che ne prendo ora la direzione, nella consapevolezza che la semiotica continui a rappresentare un banco di prova indispensabile per meglio vedere e comprendere ciò che si muove intorno a noi e per mantenere vivo e vivace un dialogo fra studiosi di ambiti disciplinari anche diversi.

Nello spirito del suo fondatore, al fianco del quale ho lungamente collaborato, ritengo un mio preciso dovere garantire la continuità e il rigore scientifico di una rivista che si può considerare, a pieno titolo, ormai storicamente consolidata nel campo degli studi semiotici. La rivista, inoltre, è l'organo di riferimento del CROSS, il centro di ricerca interuniversitario intitolato a Omar Calabrese.

Lucia Corrain

# Sommario

## Scene della nostalgia

*a cura di*  
*Mario Panico*

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## **Scene della nostalgia**

# Saudade: A Central Passion in the Discursive Construction of Portuguese National Identity

*Sebastián Moreno Barreneche*

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## 1. Introduction

Portugal has been bound to a clearly delimited territory since the thirteenth century. Since that time, this country located in the geographical margins of Europe has been the source of discourses revolving around a national identity that is distinctively Portuguese. In this article, these discourses will be referred to as *Portugueseness* [*portuguesidade*, in Portuguese]<sup>1</sup>. Throughout history, states, politicians, writers, intellectuals, citizens and other social actors have used the idea of a distinct Portuguese national identity as a means to distinguish an allegedly differential and (stereo)typical “way of being” of the people from this European country from those linked to other national identities.

Throughout the country’s history, national identity has been the subject of discussions and debates, in particular after the 1974 revolution that put an end to António de Oliveira Salazar’s dictatorship. Salazar’s regime made of the idea of a “Portuguese historical greatness” the ground of its colonialist and imperialist policies. After the 1974 revolution, a need emerged in the Portuguese public sphere – in particular, in left-wing and decolonial circles – to redefine the national community in political – and hence semiotic – terms. According to Onésimo T. Almeida (2017), the topic became a sort of national obsession.

It was in the post-1974 context that Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço published the book *O Labirinto da Saudade* [*Saudade’s Labyrinth*] with the aim of deconstructing from a critical perspective the self-images that the Portuguese had built throughout their history as a nation and to «rip off the masks that [they] mistake for the real face» (Lourenço 2000: 24, my translation). The inclusion of the noun *saudade* – a type of nostalgia frequently presented as typically Portuguese – in the title of the book gives a hint regarding the central place that this passion has had in the discourses about Portuguese national identity. The passion of *saudade* is this article’s main object of interest.

When approached from a semiotic perspective, national identities can be conceived of as cultural units of meaning (cf. Eco 1976) that are segmented in the *continuum* of national belonging and that are brought to life in discourse. As such, each national identity would constitute a differential unit located in the plane of the content that is characterized by a set of traits that distinguish it from other units that belong to that same *continuum*. These traits are perceptible through

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the discursive articulations they take in the plane of the expression. These articulations range from signs to forms of life and include texts, objects, practices and strategies (cf. Fontanille 2008), among other carriers of meaning and signification. Semioticians can access the differential units located in the plane of the content – the national identities – through the study of specific textual articulations located in the plane of the expression.

These textual articulations are normally linked to a particular entity delimited in administrative terms – a country, which tends to coincide with a nation, although this is not always the case. Studying discursive constructions like Portuguese-ness, Spanishness and Frenchness implies looking at complex discursive articulations that produce effects of sense and that have an impact on human action. These effects of sense are related to the idea of belonging to a collective unit with a history and purpose that is bigger than the individuals that are part of it: the nation. Within the framework of a semiotics of collective identities, national identities could be approached as a particular type of *geocultural* identity (cf. Montoro and Moreno Barreneche 2021). Geocultural identities are the output of a process of discursive construction revolving around a specific geographical materiality or fact. In the case of *national* identities, that delimitation occurs in national terms, i.e., it tends to coincide with the boundaries that are consensually recognized as demarcating one nation from others. This construction is grounded in the specific geographical unit – Portugal as a country with clear borders – and is brought to life in discourse through the idea of its being a differential collective identity. Portugal's geographical position in the South-Western corner of the European continent, trapped between Spain and the Atlantic Ocean, has been crucial in shaping discourses and social imaginaries about Portuguese-ness as an imagined community (cf. Anderson 1983).

As a cultural construct, Portuguese-ness has been used by social actors, both in the Portuguese public sphere and externally, with different purposes. Throughout history, the idea of Portuguese-ness has served cognitive, affective and evaluative purposes (cf. Tajfel 1982). In cognitive terms, it serves to attribute a territorial and national belonging that allows classifying individuals in national groups (“I am Portuguese; you are Spanish”). In affective terms, it implies an individual's identification in emotional terms with a national group that is different from others (“I feel Portuguese and not Spanish”). When loaded with a particular axiology, an evaluative dimension is added to the cognitive and affective ones, as was the case during Salazar's dictatorship, when through a process of hyper-axiologization, the idea of a distinctive Portuguese national identity was used as the source for the discursive justification and promotion of colonialist and imperialist policies. With Salazar, Portuguese-ness, a term that should be used to *describe* a set of differential traits at the discursive level referring to Portuguese national identity, underwent a process of mythification and became *Portugality* – or *Portuguesity* –, a concept that, as Vítor de Sousa (2017a: 383, my translation) argues, «is very much associated with the utilitarianism of myth».

The traits that are collectively imagined as distinctive and differential of Portuguese national identity are many and belong to different categories, the vast majority of them linked to mental models or mentalities (cf. Gil 2004; Lourenço 1999, 2000; Real 2010, 2017). This article studies one of those traits: *saudade*, a type of nostalgia frequently presented as typically Portuguese. It does so with a focus on the crucial role this passion has played in the discursive construction of

Portuguese national identity. Using a socio-cultural semiotic perspective interested in the discursive construction of collective identities, the article begins with a brief discussion of national identities as the output of a process of discursive construction and moves on to study the case of Portugal, with a focus on the central role of *saudade* in discourses about Portuguese national identity. To achieve this goal, a historical segmentation in past, present and future is used. The analysis is illustrated with some passages from two canonical works of Portuguese literary canon: *Os Lusíadas*, by Luís Vaz de Camões, and *Mensagem*, by Fernando Pessoa.

## 2. National Identity as a Discursive Construct

Semioticians and other scholars working in the social sciences and humanities tend to embrace a constructivist premise on how social reality is constructed intersubjectively (cf. Berger & Luckmann 1966; Landowski 2014; Lorusso 2010; 2015; Marrone 2001; Searle 1995; Verón 1988; Ventura Bordenca 2022). Therefore, they do not conceive of identity as something given, essential or pre-social and approach identities as the output of a cultural – and hence discursive – construction that occurs throughout history, that creates specific effects of sense linked to belonging and that triggers processes of identification. Embracing a constructivist premise implies assuming that there are not any specific traits that are differential of individuals or groups *naturally*. On the contrary, identities are *discursive artefacts*, that is, cultural constructs that take the form of contingent, multi-layered, complex, historical and more or less stable articulations of narratives, objects, characters, places, facts, events, traditions, social imaginaries and discourses.

When put into a systemic relation based on a principle of coherence, these elements produce the effect of sense of the unity of multiple individuals in a group with differential traits, in opposition to other groups with other traits. As Maria Fátima Amante (2011: 16, my translation) proposes, studying national identity requires paying «less attention to the origin, to the identification of elements and categories of essentialisation and more to the process, that is, to the relationship that its open character imposes and to the discursive construction of identity». Concepts like *Portugueseness* and *Portuguese national identity* refer to discursive constructs with these characteristics and not to pre-discursive essences (cf. Moreno Barreneche 2019).

Nowadays, one of the most frequent criteria used around the world to categorize individuals is their national belonging. Therefore, following Hjelmslev's (1961) work, the existence of a *continuum* of all possible national identities could be postulated. The segmentation of this *continuum* in smaller units depends on the countries that exist in the world. Collective subjects like *the Portuguese* and *the Spaniards* are semantic units that refer to groups of a national extent that result from the segmentation of this *continuum*. When considering this *continuum*, the discontinuity in the plane of the content is usually the source for the thematization in discourse of differential traits that can be perceived empirically, such as language, traditional practices, national symbols, historical events and forms of life. If in 2023 we speak of *the Portuguese* and *the Spaniards* as two distinct national identities, this occurs because we can identify in discourse some differential traits that distinguish these two collective identities as *identities* and not only as administrative units (that is, countries).

As Luís Cunha (2011: 119, my translation) argues, students of national identities should not forget that they are dealing with «a matter that is ductile but that carries with it a heavy ballast – that of the dense narratives that have been incorporated into various layers of society, from political discourse to popular usage». Semioticians interested in the construction and workings of collective identities will gather texts – in a broad sense – to analyze how these convey a particular idea of national identity while, at the same time, help constructing it in discourse as a fact. As José Carlos Almeida (2004: 149, my translation) claims, «national identities are negotiated through discourse, in which repertoires of symbols, discourses and meanings are mobilised to suit new historical needs or experiences».

If collective identities are units of meaning resulting from a cultural segmentation in differential terms of the *continuum* of national belonging, which are the traits that define Portuguese national identity as a distinctive national identity? How have these traits been thematized throughout history within the Portuguese semiosphere? The following section provides an overview of the question of Portuguese national identity through the discussion of some of the authors and key ideas that are part of the debate.

Before doing so, a note on cultural memory is needed. Over the past decades, semioticians have shown great interest in studying collective memory with a focus on the ways in which the past is textualized and culturalized (cf. Lotman 1996; Violi 2014; Salerno 2021; Bellantani and Panico 2016; Demaria 2006; Mazzucchelli 2010; Tamm 2015). Understanding the role that a differential trait plays in the synchronic discourses and social imaginaries that are dominant in a given moment of time regarding a nation's identity can give researchers a sense of which the core and peripheral traits are that define that national identity as a semiotic system. However, to properly grasp the semiotic potential of a differential trait in the discursive construction of a specific national identity, a diachronic perspective is also needed. Such a perspective will take the past into account and help explain why a specific trait occupies the hierarchical role it does in the moment that is being studied. This approach will be crucial in the study of *saudade* within discourses about Portuguese national identity.

### 3. Portuguese National Identity: Past, Present and Future

Let us begin taking the position of a reader that does not know anything about Portuguese history, culture or national identity. Nevertheless, s/he is probably aware of the existence of a country located in the South-Western corner of Europe, between Spain and the Atlantic Ocean, called Portugal. If asked about some details about it, s/he would probably be able to identify some stereotypical features that are imagined as typically Portuguese, although those stereotypes might vary depending on the reader's cultural background. By way of example, discourses about Portugal are more present due to geographical and historical reasons in the Spanish and Brazilian semiospheres than in other countries.

Semioticians interested in studying collective identities will select a textual corpus and examine how the units that compose it construct the idea of a specific national identity as something different from other national identities. The study of national symbols – flags, anthems and national emblems, among others –, monuments, the national literary canon, promotional campaigns created and run by the state, and the presence of the past in the present (for example, in commem-

orative national holidays), among many other elements that can be mapped and described, will constitute the basis for this type of work.

In the Portuguese case, national identity has also been a topic of lasting interest for scholars and intellectuals, who have produced a rich amount of discourses about what it means and implies to be Portuguese<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, semioticians are faced not only to the empirical task of analyzing specific semiotic resources and texts that convey the content of a Portuguese national identity. They should also study discourses within the Portuguese public sphere (and in other national public spheres) about it.

The Portuguese case is particularly interesting for a socio-cultural semiotic approach to national identities for a number of reasons. To begin with, Portugal's borders have been stable since the thirteenth century. As Eduardo Lourenço (2000: 24, my translation) argues, Portugal can be considered a “moving but perfectly defined reality” throughout history. This stability has been the source of an accumulative construction by the Portuguese state of the idea of a Portuguese nation with its own country. In fact, it is argued that the first narrative sketches of a Portuguese people can already be found in chronicler Fernão Lopes' *Crónica de el-rei D. João I*, written in the fifteenth century. Second, Portuguese has been the official language in the country for centuries and, as such, a source of linguistic identification and differentiation<sup>3</sup>. Finally, the pragmatic uses of national identity in Portuguese history – that is, how this notion has been used to produce effects of sense that can have an impact in the doings of people – have been various, as in the case of Salazar's dictatorship during the twentieth century, where *Portuguese-ness* was mythified as *Portugality* to justify the greatness of Portugal as the head of a colonial empire.

Various traits and historical figures are usually placed in the semiotic core of Portuguese national identity. Miguel Real (2017) identifies 15 traits that developed throughout the country's history and that in his view characterize Portuguese culture. Taking into account the argument presented here, it is worth mentioning that the second of those traits is “saudade as a predominant popular feeling”; the seventh, “fatalism, messianism and providentialism” and the eleventh, “decadentism”. Since it is impossible to deal with all the traits placed in the semiotic core of Portuguese-ness in a short article like this one, the exposition will be organized following the three standard periods of time: past, present and future. This segmentation will provide the context to understand the central role that the passion of *saudade* has played in the discursive articulation of Portuguese national identity.

Let us begin by examining the present. It is hard to define what the present of a country is since this temporal segmentation is strongly dependent of the context of enunciation of specific discourses. The title of a book published by philosopher José Gil in 2004 is *Portugal, Hoje. O Medo de Existir* [*Portugal, Today. The Fear of Existing*]. What does the deictic temporal mark *Today* mean here? Does it refer to Portugal's situation in 2004 only, or is it extendible to encompass that of 2023 as well? Where are the boundaries set when speaking of a *today* that includes the years 2004, 2023 and the almost twenty years between them? How far does that *today* go back in time, i.e., when does it begin? Is it with the revolution of April 1974? These are challenging questions because they relate to how societies construct images and discourses about their present by distinguishing it from the past and the future. In opposition to the present, which is depicted as *actual* – even if also partially constructed in discursive terms – and possible of a direct experience, past and future are the previous and upcoming moments in time and therefore are

*absent* and accessible only through texts (cf. Moreno Barreneche 2023a).

As a differential unit in the *continuum* of temporary progression, the present is defined as the time that is neither past nor future. Since discourses about national identity develop throughout history, and since current self-images are informed by the past, understanding the present requires examining the narratives revolving around the past. Moreover, narratives about the future can also be enlightening to understand the conceptions of the present since they deal with discursive constructions informed both by the past and the present (cf. Appadurai 2013). In the Portuguese case, the triad past–present–future is equivalent to the triad glory–decadence–redemption.

This triad is fundamental to understand the salient role that *saudade* has had throughout history in the discursive construction of Portuguese national identity. The underlying logic can be summarised as follows: in the past, the Portuguese nation was glorious – the Portuguese travelled the seas, discovered new places and cultures and achieved things that no other nation had achieved before. Miguel Real (2010) locates this “golden period” of Portuguese culture between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, shortly after that golden age, Portugal entered into a phase of *decadence*, which began in 1578 with the disappearance of young king Sebastião during the battle of Alcácer Quibir, in Morocco. Since king Sebastião had no descent, Portugal ended under the rule of king Philip II of Spain – who also held the title of king Philip I of Portugal – for a period of approximately 60 years.

According to Real (2010: 44-45), discourses of *decadentism* became hegemonic in the nineteenth century. The overarching national narrative poses that this state of decadence should be temporary, since the Portuguese are providentially meant to be a great nation: the myth of *Sebastianism*, forged by priest António Vieira in the seventeenth century as a national reinterpretation of catholic messianic ideas, has kept hope for redemption alive through the figure of king Sebastião as the Messiah that will come back and put the Portuguese people back on track, usually in the form of a Fifth Empire [*Quinto Império*], an idea that Vieira developed to locate Portugal as a major global empire. However, the present is not bright: as António dos Santos Pereira (2010: 33, my translation) argues, in Portuguese culture there is a «myth of a sad present compared to the long, glorious and festive past of a people, the result of the heroic acts of conquerors, saints and navigators».

The semantic unit of /glory/ is usually expressed in discourses about Portuguese national identity through narratives focused in the golden era of maritime travels, in particular those of the fifteenth century<sup>4</sup>. Portuguese maritime travels are a salient nodal point in the articulation of the idea of a glorious and golden past. As Marília dos Santos Lopes (2015: 9, my translation) argues, maritime travels are «inseparable from Portugal [...], with the sea being one of the most tenacious driving ideas in Portuguese culture, long the root and evidence of the Portuguese way of being». In the discursive construction of a glorious national past, the sea and maritime travels go hand in hand, since the former is the *locus* for the occurrence of the adventurous historical facts that allow the discursive construction of *heroism* in national terms (cf. Moreno Barreneche 2023b). Luís Vaz de Camões' epopee *Os Lusíadas* [*The Lusíads*] is a good example of this type of discursive construction of the Portuguese's golden age.

However, according to Maria Isabel João (2015: 132, my translation), the sea has not only given rise to «stories of courage and glories», but also of «of suffering

and tears» and has been «a place of mysteries and enchantments». In discourses about the glorious national past, *saudade* is already present as the feeling that sailors and their loved ones experienced when the former left Portugal for their maritime adventures: as Lopes (2015: 9, my translation) argues, «those who left took with them their longing [*saudade*] for their homes and families». This is visible in the following verses from the poem *Mar português* [*Portuguese Sea*], by Fernando Pessoa, included in *Mensagem* [*Message*]:

| English translation <sup>5</sup>   | Original version in Portuguese  |
|--|---|
| O salty sea, so much of your salt<br>Is tears of Portugal!<br>Because we crossed you, so many mothers<br>wept,<br>So many sons prayed in vain!<br>So many brides remained unmarried<br>That you might be ours, oh sea! | Ó mar salgado, quanto do teu sal<br>São lágrimas de Portugal!<br>Por te cruzarmos, quantas mães<br>choraram,<br>Quantos filhos em vão rezaram!<br>Quantas noivas ficaram por casar<br>Para que fosses nosso, ó mar! |

In *Os Lusíadas*, an epopee published in the sixteenth century that is considered Portugal's most canonical national literary work, Camões creates a voice that exalts the country's past but that is also critical with its present. This evidences some discourses already circulating in the Portuguese public sphere in that era linked to decadentism, which extend in time and reach our contemporary age. Since that time, decadentism has triggered feelings of frustration that were used, among others, during the twentieth century by Salazar to justify colonialism and imperialism. As J. R. Cavalheiro (2011: 198, my translation) argues, «one of the traits that most strongly characterized the idea of Portugueseness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the development of imperialist nationalism, a representation in which the value of the nation was inseparable from colonial historical expansion».

But hope for better days never disappeared from Portuguese social imaginaries: intellectuals have seen in the idea of Sebastianism a possible recuperation of the lost golden era. Here, a second layer of meaning seems to be attached to the concept of *saudade*: based on the feeling that sailors and their loved ones experienced when the former left Portugal to explore the seas (as expressed in Pessoa's verses), a *collective* feeling of *saudade* revolving around the idea of restoring Portugal's status as a great nation – an allegedly differential and defining trait of Portuguese society – seems to have grown from the original sense of *saudade* as an *individual* passion.

The following quote from Eduardo Lourenço (2000: 28, my translation) summarizes the ideas presented in this section as an attempt to characterize Portuguese national identity in historical terms:

national life, which had almost always been a startled, restless life, but one which was confident and trusting in its star, spinning its web from the strength of the present, was orientated towards a future that is utopian beforehand through the primordial, obsessive mediation of the past.



#### 4. *Saudade as a Typically Portuguese Type of Nostalgia*

The brief characterization of Portuguese national identity through the discussion of the past-present-future triad sets the scene for the core task of this article: to explain how *saudade*, a Portuguese version of nostalgia, became a key passion in the discursive construction of Portuguese national identity. If Portuguese national identity exhibits a tension between a glorious past, a decadent present and a future of redemption, it seems natural for discourses and social imaginaries linked to the future to be based on shared representations of the past that constitute Portugal's cultural memory. As Almeida (2004: 167, my translation) argues, «the Portuguese have a largely backward-looking view of themselves». That backward-looking view still persists in the Portuguese semiosphere in the form of a recovery and textualisation of the collective national past in a social discourse that, as António dos Santos Pereira (2010: 33, my translation) points out, preserves it as «long-lasting, glorious and festive of a people, the result of the heroic acts of conquerors, saints and navigators».

Within the Portuguese semiosphere, the feeling of *saudade* implies a longing for the past that is not merely nostalgic but that also has a light touch of positivity. This longing can be approached as a resemantization of the individual feeling of *saudade* felt by the sailors and their beloved ones, which according to Dos Santos Pereira (2010: 41, my translation) implies «the return to an original state of supposed comfort in Portuguese lands». As is argued in what follows, this short definition is aligned with Greimas' analysis of nostalgia.

For Greimas (1988: 348, my translation), nostalgia is a «complex passion state of mind». To begin his analysis, Greimas cites the Petit Robert dictionary's definition of nostalgia as «a state of decay and languor caused by the obsessive regret of the native land, the place where one has long lived». Greimas sees in this definition three segments: the first one is related to a pathemic state and includes emotions like decay, languor and melancholy; the second revolves around the pathemic states presupposed by the first one, which imply a regret that can be obsessive (or not) and that is caused by the disjunction of the Subject with an Object of Value; finally, there is the segment referring to the Object of Value lost, which according to Greimas is usually «complex and vague».

Regarding the first pathemic component, Greimas argues that decay and its synonyms share the common trait of *decrease*, that is, of becoming smaller. Moreover, the semiotician argues that this is a manifestation of the pair of semantic universals Life vs. Death and that the state we aim at describing when speaking of nostalgia is the *gradual passage* from one state to the other – nostalgia consists in a «gradual decrease of vital forces» (Greimas 1988: 345), that is, taking distance from the semantic pole of Life and approaching that of Death.

The semantic value /regret/ is linked to a state of conscience and one of pain. The state of conscience is cognitive and takes the form of a missing Object of Value, that is, a state of disjunction *in the present* that implies a change with regards to a state of conjunction *in the past*. In this sense, there is an absence of something valuable that was present in the past. In the first sense of Portuguese *saudade* – sailors leaving their homeland, their loved ones and their homes behind for the unknown –, the state of disjunction is clear; in the second sense – the Portuguese expecting the post-golden era decadence to finish –, as well. *Mensagem's* closing poem *Nevoeiro* [*Mist*] is illustrative in this sense:

| English translation <sup>6</sup>  | Original version in Portuguese   |
|---|--|
| Neither king nor law, neither peace nor war,<br>Define with outline and substance<br>This dull brilliance of the land<br>That is Portugal sinking in sadness –<br>Brightness without light or heat,<br>Like that which the will-o'-the-wisp confines.                   | Nem rei nem lei, nem paz nem guerra,<br>Define com perfil e ser<br>Este fulgor baço da terra<br>Que é Portugal a entristecer –<br>Brilho sem luz e sem arder,<br>Como o que o fogo-fátuo encerra.  |
| Nobody knows what one wants.<br>Nobody is aware of one's own soul,<br>Nor of what is evil, nor of what is pure.<br>(What distant anxiety weeps nearby?)<br>All is uncertain and ultimate.<br>All is fragmented, nothing is whole.<br>Oh Portugal, today you are mist... | Ninguém sabe que coisa quere.<br>Ninguém conhece que alma tem,<br>nem o que é mal nem o que é bem.<br>(Que ânsia distante perto chora?)<br>Tudo é incerto e derradeiro.<br>Tudo é disperso, nada é inteiro.<br>Ó Portugal, hoje és nevoeiro... |
| 'Tis the hour!  | É a Hora!  |

Regarding the Object of Value that has been lost, Greimas (1988: 346, my translation) claims that its figurative representation implies «known landscapes, loved people, moments of happiness lived». In narrative terms, the Object of Value takes the form of a «narrative programme that, once presentified and confronted to the actual state of the Subject, has adverse consequences» (Greimas 1988: 347, my translation).

Also Svetlana Boym (2001: 9), a leading scholar of nostalgia, points out that the term comes from the ancient Greek terms *nostos* (return home) and *algia* (longing), that is «a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed» and that «nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy». Moreover, the author claims that «at first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams». In any case, nostalgia implies comparing the past and the present. As Eduardo Lourenço (1999: 91, my translation) argues, «*saudade*, nostalgia or melancholy are modalities, modulations of our relationship as beings of memory and sensitivity like time».

These theoretical reflections should serve to understand the nature of Portuguese *saudade* as a passion that has – at least – two layers of meaning attached to it: on the one hand, this feeling was caused by the historical actions that are at the basis of the myth that founded the narrative of Portugal as a great nation, as evidenced in the verses of Pessoa's *Portuguese Sea* presented above and in the following passages of Camões' *Os Lusíadas*:

| English translation <sup>7</sup>   | Original version in Portuguese  |
|--|---|
| <p>On such long dubious courses sent to steer,<br/>us deemed the people den'izens of the<br/>tomb;<br/>the wailing women shed the piteous tear,<br/>and sadly sighed the men to sight our<br/>doom:<br/>Wives, sisters, mothers (most their hearts<br/>must fear<br/>whose love is foremost) added to the gloom<br/>Despair; and shudder'd with a freezing<br/>fright<br/>lest we, their loved ones, aye be lost to<br/>sight. [...]</p> | <p>Em tão longo caminho e duvidoso<br/>Por perdidos as gentes nos julgavam,<br/><br/>As mulheres cum choro piadoso,<br/>Os homens com suspiros que arranca-<br/>vam.<br/>Mães, Esposas, Irmãs, que o temeroso<br/><br/>Amor mais desconfia, acrecentavam<br/>A desesperação e frio medo<br/><br/>De já nos não tornar a ver tão cedo. [...]</p> |
| <p>Of us the Company, ne'er raising eye<br/>on wife or mother, marcht in such a state,<br/>we feared our hearts fall faint, and fain we fly<br/>our fixt resolves, repenting all too late:<br/>Thus I determined straight aboard to hie,<br/>sans "Fare-thee-wells" by custom conse-<br/>crate;<br/>which, though they be dear love's own<br/>lovely way,<br/>redouble grief to those who go or stay.</p>                                | <p>Nós outros, sem a vista alevantarmos<br/>Nem a mãe, nem a esposa, neste estado,<br/>Por nos não magoarmos, ou mudarmos<br/>Do propósito firme começado,<br/>Determinei de assi nos embarcarmos,<br/>Sem o despedimento costumado,<br/><br/>Que, posto que é de amor usança boa,<br/><br/>A quem se aparta, ou fica, mais magoa.</p>          |

In this passage of *The Lusiads*, Vasco da Gama, the leader of the maritime expedition that is about to leave the docks in Lisbon to explore the seas and find the route to India, describes the atmosphere of sadness and anxiety at the moment of departure. As argued above, in the Portuguese case the longing for the *nostos* – Greimas' Object of Value – seems to be double: on the one hand, there is an *individual* and aesthetic longing by the travellers who are leaving and will miss their homeland and loved ones, as evidences in Camões' verses; on the other hand, there is a *metaphorical* sense of *collective* longing for a home that is located in the past, for a *nostos* that is a different time in which the nation was more prosperous compared to the decadent present. The elevation of Camões as Portugal's national poet during Romanticism (Lourenço 1999: 143-154) might allow explaining how this process of resemantization of the original sense of *saudade* occurred and made of it a collective passion that has – at least in discursive terms – a *national* scope. On this second layer of meaning, *saudade* has the golden past as its lost Object of Value. The idea of an unsatisfying present that must serve as the trigger for redemption is visible in Pessoa's nostalgic poem *Prece* [Prayer] included in *Mensagem*:

| English translation <sup>8</sup>  | Original version in Portuguese   |
|---|--|
| <p>Lord, the night has come and the spirit is low.<br/> So great was the storm and the strife!<br/> What is left to us today, in the hostile silence,<br/> Are the universal sea and a yearning.<br/> But the flame, that life created within us,<br/> If there is still life, 'tis not yet done.<br/> The deathly cold concealed it in ash:<br/> The hand of the wind may yet raise it.<br/> Give the breath, the breeze – or misfortune<br/> or the eager desire–<br/> With which the flame of endeavour is rejuvenated,<br/> And again shall we conquer the Remoteness<br/> Of the sea or some other, but let it be our own!</p> | <p>Senhor, a noite veio e a alma é vil.<br/> Tanta foi a tormenta e a vontade!<br/> Restam-nos hoje, no silêncio hostil,<br/> O mar universal e a saudade.<br/> Mas a chama, que a vida em nós criou,<br/> Se ainda há vida ainda não é finda.<br/> O frio morto em cinzas a ocultou:<br/> A mão do vento pode erguê-la ainda.<br/> Dá o sopro, a aragem — ou desgraça<br/> ou ânsia —<br/> Com que a chama do esforço se remoça,<br/> E outra vez conquistaremos a Distância-<br/> Do mar ou outra, mas que seja nossa!</p> |

### Conclusions

Boym (2001: 12) points out «the nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition». This claim can be seen in action when analyzing discourses about Portuguese national identity. This is the case for the two senses of *saudade* discussed in these pages: the one felt by the sailors and they loved ones when leaving Portugal and the one which, as a resemantization of this original sense, gained a privileged position in the discourses about Portugueseness. Boym (2001: 12) argues that «it is the promise to rebuild the ideal home that lies at the core of many powerful ideologies of today, tempting us to relinquish critical thinking for emotional bonding». This seems to apply to the Portuguese case, where the “ideal home” takes the form of restoring, as Lourenço (2000: 11) proposes, of «the golden age to which Vasco da Gama and Camões conferred their titles of nobility».

This article had the purpose of showing the central position that the concept of *saudade* has within the discursive construction of Portuguese national identity. As such, its nature is theoretical and it aims at illustrating the ideas presented through some passages from two major Portuguese literary works: *Os Lusíadas* and *Mensagem*. The former was published in the sixteenth century to celebrate Portugal’s golden past and to point out the decay that is already being experienced in that time. *Mensagem* is a book written in the early twentieth century that revolves around Portuguese history and national identity – as Lopes (2010: 11) claims, its purpose is to «bring to understanding the fact that, since there are no genetic characteristics of peoples, what the Portuguese [...] share as culture is born from the ability to go out of themselves, to meet the unknown, the foreign». In this sense, an in-depth analysis of the two literary works from a socio-cultural

semiotic perspective can be fruitful to understand how the semiotic-discursive mechanisms explained in these pages sustain them. More texts – literary works, speeches, etc. – could be included in the corpus to examine if coherences are evidenced between the representations of the past, the present and the future through the concept of *saudade*. The argument presented in these pages should therefore be tested in analyses of different texts. These analyses should be in a position to show how and when *saudade* has been used throughout Portuguese history as a nodal point for the discursive articulation of a collective identity in terms of a nation.

#### Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Raquel Carinhas and the members of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel's DESIRE research group for their comments after reading the manuscript of this article.

<sup>1</sup> In this article, the term *Portugueseness* is used as an absolute synonym of *Portugal national identity*. Therefore, it refers in *descriptive* terms to a «set of remarkable characteristics of a people or culture» (Lopes 2011: 11). These characteristics are not conceived of in essentialist terms but as the output of a discursive construction throughout history revolving around national belonging that serves the purposes of personal and collective identification. In Portuguese, *Portugueseness* could be translated as *portuguesidade*. Therefore, it is not equivalent to the concept of *portugalidade*, which in English could be translated as *Portuguesity* or *Portugality*, a term with a strong ideological load that was frequently used during António de Oliveira Salazar's dictatorship to justify colonialism. Cf. Sousa (2017a; 2017b).

<sup>2</sup> Some names are Eduardo Lourenço, Miguel Real, Onésimo Teotonio Almeida, José Mattoso, Teixeira de Pascoais, Boaventura de Sousa Santos and António Quadros, to mention only a few references.

<sup>3</sup> The existence of an official language does not imply that Portuguese society is characterized by cultural homogeneity. It is rather a heterogeneous society, with a visible presence of groups of individuals from different parts of the world, in particular those countries that were Portuguese colonies like Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe, among others. Cf. Sobral (2011).

<sup>4</sup> António Lobo Antunes' novel *The Return of the Caravels* [As Naus] proposes an original parody, located in the present, of the golden years of maritime travels and some of the main historical characters of the period.

<sup>5</sup> Source of the English translation: <https://www.inverso.pt/Mensagem/MarPortugues/marportuguez.htm#ingles>

<sup>6</sup> Source of the English translation: <https://www.inverso.pt/Mensagem/Encoberto/nevoeiro.htm#ingles>

<sup>7</sup> Source of the English translation: <https://burtoniana.org/books/1880-Os%20lusiadas/Os%20lusiadas%20Vol%201.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Source of the English translation: <https://www.inverso.pt/Mensagem/MarPortugues/prece.htm#ingles>

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### **Nostalgiche ironie in *Midnight in Paris* di Woody Allen**

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Keywords: storia delle passioni; nostalgia mediale; vintage; retromania; Woody Allen

Anche le passioni subiscono o sono protagoniste a vario titolo delle mode: è il caso della nostalgia, chiamata anche retromania o passione vintage, che da molti anni è al centro del sentire comune, alimentata dai media in varie forme. Dopo un rapido excursus nella storia culturale, l'articolo si sofferma un celebre film di Woody Allen, *Midnight in Paris*, costruito appunto come un divertente caso di "nostalgia mediale". A partire da un gioco di rimandi testuali che lo caratterizzano come un meta-discorso sulla nostalgia, il film ne propone una versione "produttiva": di un rivolgersi al passato, cioè, non come disincanto e ripiego intimista, ma come necessario trampolino, sia pur ironico, per una più euforica riconversione esistenziale.

### **Nostalgie seriali: Il fantastico scenario della Fantastica signora Maisel**

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Keywords: nostalgia; vintage; serialità televisiva; umorismo ebraico; semiotica della cultura

In questo contributo sarà analizzata la serie *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (*La fantastica signora Maisel*), scritta e diretta da Amy Sherman-Palladino, e ambientata a cavallo fra gli anni Cinquanta e gli anni Sessanta del secolo scorso. Dopo una rapida presentazione dei protagonisti e delle principali linee narrative (par. 1), si passerà a considerare un'ambiguità di base, quella fra ambientazione nel passato e stili espressivi contemporanei, che ascrive questo prodotto al cosiddetto *vintage mood* (par. 2). Il par. 3 sarà dedicato all'analisi di alcuni aspetti strutturali della serie, fra cui il valore profondo/auto-realizzazione della donna/, ancora così attuale; nonché la costruzione degli attori, delle atmosfere, delle passioni, degli stili visivi e dei dialoghi. Il par. 4 verte sul ruolo della comicità, e in particolare sul doppio registro della comicità d'epoca (le performance di Miriam come *stand-up comedian*) e comicità da *sit com* creata dai personaggi della serie nelle loro relazioni reciproche "reali". L'argomento è approfondito nel par. 5 in cui si considera l'appartenenza di tutti i protagonisti alla comunità ebraica. L'intera serie ruota attorno a una forma di "lateralismo culturale" rispetto alla maggioranza WASP nella New York dell'epoca, in particolare l'umorismo ebraico funziona come un "frullatore" di valori e una continua messa in discussione delle interpretazioni. Infine, nel conclusivo par. 6, si suggerisce che l'effetto-nostalgia prodotto dalla serie sia legato soprattutto all'immersione dello spettatore in un mondo-scenario dalla coerenza perfetta. La moda, la scenografia, e tutti gli aspetti concreti di questo mondo non sono affatto accessori ma diventano "attori", protagonisti a pieno titolo accanto ai protagonisti umani. Si sospende felicemente la credenza circa un'esistenza effettiva, nel passato, di questo fantastico scenario e se ne fruisce come in un'esperienza di realtà estesa.

## **Da Top Gun a Top Gun: Maverick: Intertestualità e ipertestualità al servizio della nostalgia** Piero Polidoro (Università LUMSA di Roma – p.polidoro@lumsa.it)

Keywords: semiotica; cinema; audiovisivo; intertestualità; nostalgia; narrazione

*Top Gun* (USA 1986, regia di Tony Scott) è stato uno dei film più iconici degli anni Ottanta del secolo scorso e ancora oggi ha numerosi fan. Nel 2022, dopo ben trentasei anni e molti rinvii, è arrivato finalmente nelle sale cinematografiche il suo *sequel*, *Top Gun: Maverick* (USA 2022, regia di Joseph Kosinski). In questo articolo verrà analizzato il modo in cui il nuovo film è riuscito a proporre una storia originale e – al tempo stesso – a recuperare il patrimonio nostalgico rappresentato dal film del 1986. Per farlo, verranno innanzitutto messe in evidenza le differenze narrative fra i due film. Successivamente, usando i concetti messi a punto da Gérard Genette, verranno identificati i meccanismi intertestuali e ipertestuali che collegano *Top Gun: Maverick* a *Top Gun*, distinguendoli in tre categorie: 1) citazioni e allusioni, 2) riferimenti ipertestuali senza trasformazioni narrative, 3) riferimenti ipertestuali con trasformazioni narrative. Con diversi gradi e a diversi livelli, questi tre tipi di meccanismi permettono al film del 2022 di recuperare in funzione nostalgica quello del 1986, riuscendo però anche a sviluppare una trama e strutture narrative autonome.

## **Come d'incanto: Il nostalgico ritorno del futuro negli immaginari premediati**

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Keywords: premediazione; futuro; feticismo; nostalgia; incanto

Gli immaginari sul futuro che popolano il panorama mediale contemporaneo spesso disegnano scenari distopici e disorientanti, suscitando nello spettatore un certo senso di nostalgia per un tempo passato o per ciò che rimane del presente prima dell'apocalisse incombente. La strategia nostalgica si gioca proprio nella relazione, spesso di sovrapposizione, tra questi piani temporali e mediali, che mettono in comunicazione la dimensione dell'immaginario futuro con quella dello spettatore nel momento della visione. Media e tecnologie sono protagonisti di molti universi narrativi distopici, dove spesso sono tematizzati e raffigurati come elementi negativi: strumenti diventati fine e scopo, colpevoli di avere sterilizzato il mondo reale e appiattito l'immaginario; protesi che hanno progressivamente anestetizzato corpo e mente dell'essere umano, narcotizzandone la presa estetica e significativa sulla realtà, la capacità di dare e creare senso (cfr. Montani 2014).

Tuttavia, il merito di questi immaginari premediati (cfr. Grusin 2010; Demaria e Piluso 2020) è quello di offrire allo spettatore una via di fuga, verso una nuova spirale riflessiva. La nostalgia del passato viene proiettata sugli stessi oggetti mediali e tecnologici che ne hanno sciolto l'incanto. Media e tecnologie sembrano recuperare la propria aura – si fanno oggetti museali, di valore nostalgico a cui potersi "finalmente" ricongiungere. Lo spettatore gode di questi beni in maniera feticistica: non si tratta di superare l'alienazione, del rivedere se stessi nell'immagine che questi oggetti riflettono, ma piuttosto di perdersi nello spettacolo di un'immagine che si riverbera lungo la superficie dello schermo, di rimanere incantati di fronte alla perfezione operativa e alla chiusura riflessiva di una realtà troppo oggettivata per venire assoggettata.

Non si tratta del mito di Prometeo e dell'origine della civiltà umana, ma piuttosto di quello di Narciso (cfr. McLuhan 1967), nella sua interpretazione più apocalittica – e come ogni mito, si tratta di ideologia. Attraverso l'analisi di alcuni immaginari mediali sul futuro, in particolare il film d'animazione *Wall-e* e la serie *Love, Death + Robot*, l'obiettivo di questo contributo sarà di indagare le logiche narrative, mediali e soprattutto visive/figurative che ne sostengono la mitologia. Il tema della nostalgia sarà oggetto e strumento di indagine privilegiato: vettore prezioso per comprendere la relazione tra i testi in esame e il loro senso, tra immagini e immaginario.

## **La nostalgie au futur: Autour de La vie des objets de Mohamed El Khatib**

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Keywords: sémioesthétique; nostalgie; affiches; objets; Charles Sanders Peirce

Dans cette contribution, nous souhaitons examiner la complexité du dispositif mémoriel mis en place par le metteur en scène Mohamed El Khatib dans *La vie des objets* (2021), en collaboration avec la photographe Yohanne Lamoulère, qui a été exposée au Maif Social Club (Paris).

L'intérêt de cette création vis-à-vis des relations entre nostalgie, mémoire et objets est double.

D'un côté, le "visible" se rend en quelque sorte "tangibile" par la spécificité des objets "représentés" ou, mieux, imprimés sur les affiches composant l'exposition. Ce sont des objets ordinaires qui sont associés à des récits de vie issus de moments et milieux fragiles – personnes en situation de marginalité sociale, migrations, etc. De ce point de vue, la sémiose mémorielle est directement inscrite sur le support *matériel et formel* (les affiches), et active des processus d'investissement somatique et des dynamiques de traduction intersémiotique entre les objets et les textes.

De l'autre côté, le caractère reproductible et sériel des affiches, ainsi que l'objet-affiche en tant que tel, semblent engendrer une dynamique seconde d'appel à la mémoire chez les visiteurs. Ils pouvaient emporter avec eux les affiches-objets de leur choix. Ainsi, ils deviennent eux-mêmes des œuvres d'une mémoire autre, seconde, réflexive par rapport aux témoignages et aux objets imprimés, en se posant à la fois comme vestiges d'un temps double (le vécu affiché et celui du visiteur), et antidote à une nostalgie à venir (le conflit entre trace et oubli, la promesse de mémoire déléguée aux visiteurs).

En d'autres termes, les affiches et les objets de cette création semblent réaliser une véritable extériorisation du vécu nostalgique, individuel et collectif. Dans ce sens, la mise en relation de la "nostalgie" avec l'"Eingedenken" d'Ernst Bloch tel qu'il est repris par Walter Benjamin – ainsi que les traductions de ce terme, "souvenance" ou "immémoration" –, nous permettra de dégager le potentiel de futur inscrit dans les traces du passé.

### **Effetto di passato: Strategie cognitive ed estetiche della nostalgia nel fumetto contemporaneo**

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Keywords: fumetti; nostalgia; narratologia; semiotica visiva; archeologia dei media

Lo scopo di questo articolo consiste nell'analizzare i meccanismi nostalgici presenti nel fumetto contemporaneo, identificando le caratteristiche tematiche, stilistiche e strutturali che concorrono a generare un effetto nostalgico di concerto con l'interattività e le lacune che caratterizzano la narrazione a fumetti. Concentrandosi sugli aspetti propri del medium del fumetto, il contributo evidenzia nondimeno procedimenti ed effetti di senso comuni ad altri media. Nello specifico, l'articolo individua nell'esperienza nostalgica una serie di tensioni, che vengono rappresentate tematicamente attraverso motivi legati a momenti, luoghi, oggetti ed esperienze sensoriali in grado di creare un effetto nostalgico (che in alcuni casi viene definito "effetto di passato"). Si analizzano, inoltre, le strategie stilistiche sottese all'estetica nostalgica, considerando in particolare il ruolo della grafiazione e del colore, e la loro connessione con la materialità del medium. Viene discusso il modello analettico come struttura prototipica delle narrazioni nostalgiche, investigandone le peculiarità nel fumetto ed esaminando le implicazioni nostalgiche di strategie transtestuali come la paratestualità, le riscritture e la capacità archivistica del mezzo. Infine, l'articolo approfondisce l'effetto di eco e rinforzo delle narrazioni nostalgiche derivanti dai meccanismi cognitivi ed emotivi legati al fumetto, come la tessitura di rimandi semantici e figurativi tra vignette e la presenza di lacune narrative che necessitano di essere riempite da parte del lettore.

### **Odisseo e la nostalgia del divenire**

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Keywords: nostalgia; Odissea; semiotica interpretativa; De Chirico; semiotica della cultura

Gli studi contemporanei sulla nostalgia inquadrano il concetto principalmente da un punto di vista temporale, cioè kantianamente come una passione rivolta verso un passato perduto e irraggiungibile. Tuttavia, alcuni studi psicologici mostrano che gli individui inquadrano il sentimento in maniera composita e non sempre riconducibile a questo quadro (cfr. Hepper et al. 2012). Questo è probabilmente dovuto al fatto che la storia della nostalgia nella nostra cultura si nutre di immagini e rappresentazioni ben più radicate e durevoli del concetto stesso introdotto da Hofer nel 1688. Nell'enciclopedia (Eco 1984) circola infatti un concetto diverso di nostalgia, connesso alla sua rappresentazione omerica (cfr. Austin 2010), dove il sentimento unisce al rimpianto per uno spazio altro il desiderio di agire e una spinta motivazionale. Indagando come il sentimento nostalgico si articola nell'*Odissea*, si mostrerà come la passione di Odisseo non sia solo relativa ad un luogo, ma ad una temporalità che include una posizione spaziale e attoriale, un desiderio di divenire e di evolversi che Odisseo insegue al di là di ogni promessa di immortalità. Per mostrare come questa nostalgia

del divenire si articoli partiremo del quadro di de Chirico *Il ritorno di Ulisse*, e analizzeremo diversi episodi come quello dell'isola di Calipso e dell'incontro finale tra Penelope e l'eroe.

### **The Room of the Saint: Museums and the Management of Nostalgia**

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Keywords: museum; saint; indexicality; grief; memory

Greimas (1986) encourages researchers to explore the mechanisms by which the nostalgic subject, “débrayé” from the object of value, presentifies this object thus originating a “doubled” pathemic path characterized by an imaginary isotopy. In Proust, e.g., this mechanism is activated through the madeleine, but its varieties and characteristics are still to be fully explored. This paper intends to shed light on a specific kind of nostalgic mechanism, based on two premises:

1. The unreachable object of value can also be “a person”, and the loss can be due to death. Reflection must therefore be devoted to the relationship between nostalgia and the elaboration of the memory of the deceased (mourning).
2. The mechanism of nostalgia can be not only individual and private, but also collective and institutional. From this perspective, several kinds of museums can be seen as strategic cultural devices for the management of nostalgia connected to people, objects or events belonging to a mythologized past.

The case of the museums devoted to saints of the Catholic Church, generally owned by religious orders, provide a good example of this institutional management of the nostalgic memory of an exemplary figure, loved by the faithful.

Indeed, saints are recognized as such after their death: their cult is basically “retrospective”, and even though it entails the creation of a spiritual relationship, in Catholic culture there is a strong attachment to all the indexical signs that give the faithful the impression to maintain a bodily connection with the venerated characters. This is true not only for relics, but also for the saints’ room or cell. The importance attributed to the cell can be related to a religious imaginary that creates a parallelism between the interior and spiritual space of the soul and the exterior space of the room in which the spiritual experience takes place (cf. Ponso 2023; Leone 2013): the material space of the cell is deemed to bear traces of the spiritual quality of the exceptional individuals who inhabited them, thus resulting somehow “sanctified”. This explains why the saints’ houses or cells are often musealized, as part of the process of construction and transmission of their memory. These museums aim at providing a testimony which is both historical and religious, and have to face the potential clash – typical of Catholic culture – between the need for signs of the saints’ bodily life, and the need to deviate the attention from materiality to spirituality (cf. Leone 2014).

The analysis of a sample of museums of saints (e.g. Giovanni Bosco, Pio of Pietrelcina) shows therefore the strategies which make the saints’ room available to visitors, and how settings and paratexts improve the visitor’s cultural-historical knowledge, but also create or reinforce a pathemic bond with the saints by presentifying and materializing their absence. The analysis takes inspiration from studies about the construction of places of memory, the spatial language of the museums, and their semio-ethnographic observation (cf. Violi 2014, Pezzini 2011, Marsciani 2021). These theories, mainly elaborated with reference to secular museums, are re-thought in relation to the cultural-religious context of the considered case study, as well as to the mechanism of nostalgia, intended as a semiotic strategy used to regulate (both igniting and containing) the sense of loss and desire for the saintly figure.

### **La nuova nostalgia della letteratura ebraica**

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Keywords: nostalgia; distacco; espulsione; letteratura ebraica statunitense; letteratura ebraica israeliana

Il distacco dal “villaggio dell’infanzia” produce una nostalgia che diventa un perno psichico per ciascuno di noi. Nel caso della cultura ebraica, la perdita della propria terra d’origine fa sì che i temi del rimpianto e della nostalgia siano delle vere e proprie costanti. Il presente contributo, senza aspirare

a una generalizzazione che lo spazio a disposizione non permetterebbe, propone alcuni esempi di scrittori e romanzi appartenenti alla cultura ebraica in cui il tema della nostalgia è particolarmente cruciale e soprattutto, a seconda delle epoche e dei contesti, in trasformazione. La letteratura ebraica del Novecento sembrava modulata prevalentemente su un registro secondo cui il distacco si alterava in una variante patologica più simile all'espulsione. Negli ultimi decenni del secolo scorso emerge però, soprattutto negli Stati Uniti, la determinazione a uscire dal *leitmotiv* del "popolo escluso": gli scrittori ebrei americani aspirano ad affermarsi come scrittori *tout-court* anche se, in questa fase, gli esiti rimangono parziali e la nostalgia legata alla peculiare tradizione ebraica sembra non essere mai stata veramente esautorata. Al contrario, le nuove generazioni di scrittori, pur non unificate da una comune percezione, hanno fatto notevoli passi avanti nel tentativo di emergere dalla drammatica storia del popolo ebraico per volgersi a un futuro dove anche la nostalgia sia un sentimento universale, comune a tutti gli uomini.

**Saudade: A Central Passion in the Discursive Construction of Portuguese National Identity**  
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Keywords: saudade, Portugal, nostalgia, passions, national identity

Portugal has been bound to a clearly delimited territory since the thirteenth century. Since that time, this country located in the geographical margins of Europe has been the source of discourses revolving around Portuguese national identity. Over the past centuries, social actors have used these discourses to distinguish an alleged Portuguese way of being from those linked to other national groups. This article uses a socio-cultural semiotic perspective to argue that national identities can be approached as the output of a dynamic process of discursive construction that is extended in time. In particular, it studies the Portuguese case with a focus on the central role that *saudade* – a type of nostalgia frequently presented as typically Portuguese – has played in the discursive articulation of Portuguese national identity.

**Nostalgic Advertising: Exploring the Dialogue Between Semiotics and Nostalgia Marketing**  
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Keywords: semiotics, nostalgia, marketing, advertising, Covid-19

The objective of this research is to analyze the passion of nostalgia in advertising from both theoretical and analytical perspectives. The theoretical part of the study aims to explain nostalgia in the field of semiotics of consumption by exploring the differences and similarities between nostalgia and the vintage mood, the different emotions that drive them, and how nostalgia works. It also investigates who are the perfect targets for nostalgia marketing strategies. Media and marketing collaborate to evoke old or new feelings of nostalgia, selecting what is worth recovering from the past. Nostalgic ads trigger memories of the past, permeating everyday life and continually influencing consumers' practices and choices. Therefore, advertising provides an interesting area for analyzing nostalgia. The use of nostalgia indicates a certain way of considering consumption: the past is rediscovered and re-proposed, without losing contact with modernity. The analytical part of the paper focuses on advertisements in the fields of automotive, fashion, food, and technology. The study conducts a semiotic analysis of the advertisements using the theoretical frame of structural semiotics. The aim is to analyze the different manifestations of nostalgia in advertising, in order to show how semiotics can help us to understand the values and the meanings behind the advertising messages, and how vintage mood is conveyed differently by each of them. From a narrative standpoint, nostalgia indicates a disconnection from an object of value, and the nostalgia strategy aims to establish a pathemic connection with the consumer by presenting past products, places, and practices in a modern way. Moreover, the nostalgic text inscribes within it a specific profile of the public and establishes with it a communicative pact in which the past is evoked as an element of connection. The analysis also includes nostalgic advertising during the Covid-19 pandemic, where commercials recalled moments of past daily life that were temporarily lost due to the pandemic. Semiotics allows us to grasp these aspects and analyze their implications.