

Editorial — IDENTITY

“Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You.”

— Dr. Suess

What is it that makes us who we are? The concept of identity is a fluid one, rich in possibilities and conflicts. This issue of Aigne embraces aspects of theatre, architecture, fictional narrative, auto-ethnography, literary theory and social anthropology to proffer an interdisciplinary gathering of postgraduate voices that discuss and explore various aspects of “Identity”. Each voice provides a unique contribution to ongoing scholarly discussions from a range of fields of study.

Joshua Pate provides a unique and stimulating article on disability in *Defining Disability: An auto-ethnography on the lived experiences of someone with Cerebral Palsy*. Identifying impairment as a medical condition and disability as the social treatment received by people with a perceived physical impairment, Pate uses personal vignettes together with social theories and developmental psychology to highlight the importance of choice and locus of control for the person with physical impairment when constructing identity. His own experiences in familial and broader social settings, from adolescence through to fatherhood, provide a fresh perspective on the lived experience of a person with a physical impairment. His paper also opens up avenues for discussion on perception and disability.

Engaging with the semiotics espoused by Umberto Eco, Niall O’Sullivan paper *Gateways and Ghost Estates: Signifying Ireland’s national identity after the Celtic Tiger era* investigates the landmark architecture produced during the economic boom and its relationship to national identity in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. O’Sullivan takes the Elysian building in Cork City to examine the notions of globalization and internationalism that informed development projects during the Celtic Tiger era and the consequences of interrupting traditional conceptions of the purpose of architecture in relation to local community and identity.

Migrant Theatre and the Aesthetics of Identity by Roxanne Paire focuses on the relationship between notions of space and identity. Through a critique of Anne Uberfeld’s *double énonciation*, Paire illustrates the anxiety between conceptualizations of individual and collective identity in two contemporary pieces of migrant theatre, *Les filles du 5-10-15c* by Abla Farhoud and *Rien d’humain* by Marie NDiaye.

This sense of anxiety in conceptualizations of identity in immigrants is raised again in *Who Are You and Where Do You Come From?* by Francis Machingura and Jesca Mushoperi Machingura. This time, however, the anxiety is defined as a crisis as Machingura and Machingura provide a sociological investigation into the relationship between African immigrants and mainstream German society. Their personal interviews with immigrants

provide a fascinating juxtaposition with the socio-political climate they present of contemporary Germany and its attitudes towards African immigrants.

Conor Michael Dawson furthers the case for identity crisis with his paper on depersonalization disorder in postmodern texts of the late twentieth century. Close textual analysis of Tim O'Brien's 1994 novel *In the Lake of the Woods* and its companion essay "The Vietnam in Me," Chuck Palahniuk's 1996 novel *Fight Club* and David Fincher's 1999 film of the same name reveal fragmentation of identity and the increasing sense of alienation from society through psychological disorders of the protagonists.

As traditional national and political borders open up and a more fluid movement of peoples and cultures, caught in the sweep of economic globalization, emerges, conceptualizations of identity becomes ever more complex. How do we define ourselves? How do we define others? How are these definitions translated through history, architecture, literature, migration? This issue of *Aigine* may not have presented any set answer to any of these questions but by gathering papers from a variety of disciplines, we hope that a platform has been provided for the dissemination of new postgraduate research that can inform future debates on the issue of identity.

Editorial — Defining disability:

An auto-ethnography on the lived experiences of a person with cerebral palsy

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Abstract

The purpose of this auto-ethnography is to reveal how instrumental life situations for a person with a physical disability present opportunities to define disability, rather than allowing disability to define the individual. This paper explores the definitions of disability and impairment, and how locus of control can shape those definitions. Four theories are related to instrumental life situations and the desire to control one's disability: theory of reasoned action, self-categorization theory, developmental psychology, and dialogical self theory. The instrumental life situations and four theories are categorized by (1) Building Relationships and Acceptance; (2) Evolving Relationships; and (3) Defining Self. We categorize people by gender, race, ethnicity, and ability, amongst other things, particularly in regard to minorities. Once those categorical walls are constructed, they become difficult to shed. It is the consistent action of taking ownership in one's disability — or ability — that can make strides toward removing categorical perceptions.

I was born with cerebral palsy (CP), a condition in the brain that can affect balance, muscle spasticity, speech, and to a greater extent, cognitive abilities. My CP affects balance and muscle spasticity primarily, resulting in my use of forearm crutches for walking assistance. My gait includes bent legs and dragged feet. Seen at face value, it may not be the most pleasant of sights with stiff legs and quick movements. Others see me and may feel compassion and pity, or confusion and interest. They may wonder what I can and cannot do, and may assume or draw conclusions based on their own past experiences to explain why I walk the way I walk. In many eyes, I have a physical disability. Yet, disability cannot be explained or defined with some basic level of agreement among scholars, practitioners, and government agencies (Rothstein et al., 2002; Smart and Smart, 1997; Zola, 1993).

Face value often shapes the definition of disability. Crutches, wheelchairs, or prosthetics may be associated with disability and confinement that controls the individual. Yet, those innovative pieces of equipment are the very means by which a person with a physical impairment may use to enhance mobility, taking upon greater independence. I strive for others to see beyond face value by subduing my physical impairment into a secondary quality with the aim of allowing others to see me for who I am and what I can do rather than what I look like and what I cannot do. I strive for others to avoid making my physical

capabilities my only means of identification. It is not possible to completely disregard my physical traits, as my crutches are a marked characteristic of which I am not ashamed nor desire to hide. While physical characteristics may not be eliminated, my desire is for people to see other characteristics equally or with greater value than my physical impairment. I want to show that physical characteristics do not have to be the only means of identification by taking control of instrumental life situations such as participation in sport, shopping, or independently participating in social activities.

The purpose of this auto-ethnography is to reveal how instrumental life situations for a person with a physical disability present opportunities to define disability, rather than allowing disability to define the individual. I begin this paper by exploring the definitions of disability and impairment. The two terms are mistakenly used interchangeably, but are defined differently as set forth by the social model approach. Next, I explain locus of control and how it can shape perceptions of disability. I then apply four theories in relation to instrumental life situations. These instrumental life situations and four theories are categorized by the following themes: (1) Building Relationships and Acceptance; (2) Evolving Relationships; and (3) Defining Self. I conclude by discussing how my experiences may be applied by others. First is a discussion of auto-ethnography and the terminology used with regard to disability and impairment.

Auto-ethnography

Merriam (2009) defines ethnography as the study of human society and culture, with culture representing the “beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people” (p. 27). Auto-ethnography is a type of ethnography in which the researcher serves as the author while analyzing his or her own experiences as primary data (Ellis, 1993; McIlveen, 2008). Ethnography has its roots in anthropology, but auto-ethnography is connected with the practicality of therapy. Parry (1991) argues that writing one’s own stories is a way in which the author can analyze and interpret his or her own life. Introducing a third party interpreter creates the risk of losing the accurate interpretation. In fact, in the therapy setting, Parry (1991) states that there is “no better way to confuse and discredit a person in her own eyes than for someone else . . . to tell her what she is experiencing or what her experience means” (p. 5).

Based on this definition of auto-ethnography, there is power in providing emotion and cultural perspectives of one’s own experiences (Creswell, 2007). Ellis (1993) provides the best example of capturing emotion and perspective that may not have otherwise been accessible with her auto-ethnography on her brother’s unexpected death. In capturing the family’s experience with death, she sought to connect a lived experience with research to perhaps open the topic for greater discussion on academic and practical levels. It should be noted, however, that expressing those experiences is not easy. Auto-ethnography has

its challenges with regard to representation, objectivity, data quality, legitimacy, and ethics (Wall, 2008). Perhaps the greatest limitation is that auto-ethnography cannot generalize to a broader audience (McIlveen, 2008). Yet it may serve as a stimulus for discussion and study (Ellis, 1993; McIlveen, 2008; Wall, 2008). My goal is similar in that I aim to explore my own lived experiences with disability in a way that may create discussion of what disability means to others, and what it means to the person who lives with a disability.

Disability vs. Impairment

Disability is a term that gets used frequently without much thought of a proper definition. The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (1976) defines disability as the “disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities” (UPIAS, 1976, p. 14). Disability is a “situation, caused by social conditions, which requires for its elimination” (p. 3). The U.S. Census Bureau assesses disability through concepts of communication, mental, and physical disability as well as measuring activities of daily living, such as bathing and eating, and instrumental activities of daily living, such as leaving home or budgeting money (Brault, 2009). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 36.1 million people (12.1%) in the U.S. population report having a disability (Brault, 2009). The term disability often is treated as synonymous with impairment, which UPIAS defines as “lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ, or mechanism of the body” (p. 14). Impairment, then, refers to one’s medical condition, whereas disability is the social treatment one receives as a result of such impairment. This type of definition references the social model of disability, which removes medical analysis of disability and places emphasis on ability and any social constraints that prevent access (Grenier, 2011; Moola, Fusco, and Kirsh, 2011).

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) International Classification System of Functioning, Disability, and Health includes a discussion of impairments and acknowledges social influence on defining disability (WHO, n.d.). The WHO attempts to incorporate both medical and social analysis of disability, although the social model is widely accepted among the disability community. Still, adhering strictly to the social model to view disability is not universally popular because it ignores physical aspects of disability and other social divisions (Oliver, 2004). Imrie (1997, as cited in Brittain, 2004) argues that the social model assumes that changing the physical environment will result in changed experiences. However, it is not only the physical environment that dictates the experiences of a person with a disability, as psychological treatment can result in social isolation and oppression. Whether by physical or psychological oppression, the social model as defined by the UPIAS (1976) holds that it is “society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is

something imposed on top of our impairments, by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society” (p. 3). Disability, by this conclusion, is the result of society excluding people with impairments.

Based on the previous discussion, CP is my physical impairment. My disability is negative social treatment due to my physical impairment, such as exclusion from a second-floor restaurant that offers no elevator and no handrail with its stairs, as an example. To combat this oppression, individuals such as myself must “assume control over their own lives” and “professionals, experts, and others who seek to help must be committed to promoting such control by disabled people” (UPIAS, 1976, p. 3). Next, I will address how one can assume control over his or her own life.

Self-Reflection on Control

There are many factors in day-to-day life that cannot be controlled with a physical disability like CP. How tight will my muscles be when I get out of bed? How slick will the floor be because of the rain? Will my crutches slide on a stray leaf and result in a fall? Those thoughts consume my mind at times, although it is a positive sign that I am not choosing to remain locked indoors but rather choose to socialize despite the risks. Falling is rare, and few people know how to react aside from the natural panic attack. The way I cope is through laughter. Falling and laughing at the situation, assuming I am not broken in some capacity, instantly cures any panic that onlookers may exude. The laughter is a controlling factor, where I identify a situation in which I am not in control and take measures to obtain that control.

Locus of control is one’s own perception about the power source in life (Russell, 2009). External locus of control is when we perceive that we have no control and are merely pawns moved by forces outside of our realm (Russell, 2009). External locus of control is exemplified when an individual’s reasoning for not participating in physical activity is due to their disability or some constraint they perceive to prevent them from participating. Internal locus of control is when we perceive we are the origin of our own life events and is often connected to emotional maturity (Russell, 2009). Internal locus of control is exemplified when a person with a disability chooses to focus on what he or she can do despite the physical challenges that may be present.

Negotiation for locus of control can be seen as teenagers through relationship development that is largely dependent upon others (Russell, 2009). College is filled with pursuits of independence, while the adult years that follow include certain restrictions due to children or career patterns (Russell, 2009). The importance of locus of control in social recreation is enhanced for people with disabilities, particularly if they did not experience relationship development as a teenager, independence in college, or changes in independence due to adult commitments (Russell, 2009). For example, a person born with a physical disability

that experienced social isolation and was excluded from developing relationships as a teen may use adult social activities to reclaim internal locus of control. The challenge is whether the individual seizes those opportunities.

Establishing Trust

There are two types of people I encounter: those that ask about disability within the first few meetings, and those that never ask. My deep relationships include individuals who have done both. Students that I teach, however, exclusively have avoided the conversation, perhaps due to the authority between student and teacher. I often wonder what internal reactions are present when students see that their instructor uses crutches. I typically disclose my disability and talk extensively about it in class. The internal locus of control provides me great comfort in discussing disability with students by advancing relationships and proactively addressing questions they may have about my physical abilities or of my abilities as an instructor.

Conversely, it is gratifying just as it would be for any scholar when colleagues and students seek my advice on academic endeavors or career aspirations. However, as an individual with a disability, it covertly sends the message they are viewing qualities I possess aside from my physical traits. Those relationships often require development over time. When my relationships get to the position where the other person no longer offers to help me with the smallest of tasks — putting on my coat, standing up, or carrying my laptop bag — it confirms they have moved beyond identifying me first and foremost by my disability.

Relationship building in this instance aligns with the theory of reasoned action. The theory of reasoned action is based on the assumption that people are rational and make systematic use of information available to them (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Belleau, Summers, Xu and Pinel, 2007). Based on this theory, people consider the implications of their actions before deciding to engage in a behavior. Applying the theory of reasoned action to the first day of class or when a colleague seeks academic consultation, the individuals are invested in a committed relationship and therefore may not wish to compromise that relationship. For example, a student in class who sees her instructor with crutches may not wish to risk damaging her status in the class by inquiring about the disability. Also, a colleague who asks a research-focused question may not have disability at the forefront of priorities, but simply may only wish to know an answer to his or her question. Alternatively, individuals have at times avoided asking me direct questions pertaining to disability, potentially due to perceived implications of the conversation. For example, colleagues have asked my academic mentor if placing a table blocking the automatic door opener to the office would affect me. Another colleague asked my mentor if a table was placed in the men's restroom at my request. In both examples, a potential explanation as to why the colleagues bypassed asking me the questions and instead asked my mentor may be their desire to

avoid an awkward social situation. One possibility is that those individuals perceived that implications of the conversation may damage established relationships, and that asking those questions would not be socially acceptable.

Social Acceptance

Experiences prior to my professional career include memories of influential instructors, social experiences, and play. I completed my seventh-grade requirement of running 15 laps around the basketball court in physical education class, finishing well after most of my classmates had changed into their regular school clothes. I finished the assignment to the applause from my classmates. My football talents were never questioned in the side lot of my church, playing with four other children of similar ages. An accepted rule in our make-believe games was any pass that touched my crutch meant I caught the football. In high school, I was permitted to leave five minutes early from every class to avoid the crowded hallways and was an active participant in social events. I played on the high school golf team, beating three golfers from opposing schools and receiving support from parents as I completed my matches at the 9th hole. Peers in college knew me from writing at the school newspaper and driving my car to classes rather than walking across the 560-acre set of buildings. Walking to class like the rest of the freshmen class was not ideal, and waiting on the university-provided shuttle van was not efficient. At age 18, it was the first time I regularly used accessible parking.

My social experiences as an adolescent and teenager can be associated with self-categorization theory (Turner, Oakes, Haslam and McGarty, 1994). As outlined by the theory, personal identity and social identity are distinguished as two levels of self-categorization. Personal identity includes self categories that define an individual as unique, highlighting the differences from others within the group (Turner et al., 1994). I often found myself as the only person with a physical disability in social settings such as sport events, social activities such as shopping, or classes. In fact, I did not have a class with another person who displayed a physical impairment until my second year of college so my personal identity was a person with a physical impairment surrounded by able-bodied individuals. Social identity, however, refers to social categorizations of self and others that highlight the shared similarities with others in the group (Turner et al., 1994). My social identity allowed me to fit in with other adolescents and teenagers, even college-aged young adults, because of my social involvement with teams, school-sponsored organizations, and peer groups. Connecting more with my social identity allowed me to perceive myself as part of a group, using “we” and “us” to identify with the golf team or a group of friends. Social identity, according to self-categorization theory, allows one to define self as part of the group (Turner et al., 1994). Shared social identity results in depersonalization of self-perception, allowing a person to see themselves as less different while identifying with a group of people.

I have been able to minimize my perceptions of my differences through creating a shared social identity and building relationships within these communities.

Evolving Relationships

Before my wife and I married, she left town for a weeklong vacation following our first date. It allowed me to spend hours on the phone with her and display my character to her rather than my physical attributes. I was able to display my inner qualities to her without the focus being on my physical characteristics. We quickly built a relationship from our conversations. Now, my wife holds me accountable for cleaning the bathroom at home, washing the dishes, and helping get our toddler son ready for bed each night, all typical physical expectations from a spouse. I never minded cleaning house because I quickly recognized in my early bachelorhood it was a series of physical tasks I could accomplish. Other household chores such as taking the trash down the steep driveway is not an easy task, but it is one I was forced to do the first week my wife travelled out of state. Thursday night, in the dark, can stuffed with trash in bags, I walked with my right crutch as balance and my left hand guiding the two-wheeled trash can down the hill while holding my left crutch horizontally. It was slow and not aesthetically pleasing, but the trash was in place for the following morning's pickup. Our 1940s-style house does not include a dishwasher, so my job in the kitchen increases when we dine in. I typically maneuver throughout our home with just one crutch as balance, so to wash dishes I lean it against the corner of the counter and brace myself against the sink. Caring for our son is a shared role, and my daily routine includes bathing him at night and helping him dress in the morning before going to daycare. These jobs may be regular chores for husbands, and I embrace having chores that are common among all households.

Prior to splitting chores as a married couple, my college roommate and I shared responsibility of maintaining our apartment. He and I were from the same hometown, graduated from the same high school within a year of each other, and lived together both on campus and in an off-campus apartment. Through living together, he quickly realized his role in physically helping me through life was nonexistent. I asked him for help carrying my laundry basket from my car up the eight steps to our apartment door, and I asked him to take out the trash. Conversely, I kept our apartment clean through weekly chores. I would say our arrangement in terms of physical requirements was equal. After living together six years, he once asked me to join him in a 5-kilometer race he was entering. Such an invitation confirmed he recognized the impairment but overlooked disability. In fact, others have casually asked if I am participating in events such as road races with our group of peers only to catch themselves, for a moment, forgetting disability.

Most of my relationships have evolved with the other person having to shift perceptions of my disability. My toddler son, however, has only known disability as part of our lives.

He thinks nothing of retrieving my crutches at 6 a.m. when he wants cereal and cartoons. “Papa, I’m hungry,” is quickly followed with him bringing both crutches to the side of the bed, leaning them on the mattress, and pulling my hand with a pleading cry. He moves at a slower speed with me as opposed to with my wife. He holds my wife’s hand when walking in a parking lot; he holds my left crutch when it is just the two of us. Three years prior, my nerves were shaky when faced with handling a baby, moving him from crib to living room, and holding him to feed him. After working with a physical therapist and practicing with heavy and awkward objects such as weights and plates of food, I mastered the art of carrying a newborn 100 feet from his crib to the recliner using just one hand and one crutch. I could have dropped him in what would have surely been a target of parental criticism. Yet without attempting to even achieve such a task at my own pace and using my own creativity, I would have been left without the full fatherhood feeling of physically contributing as my infant grew into a mobile toddler. I would have felt helpless in the task of physically caring for my son. My impairment would have transformed into a disability. In doing so, I would have succumbed to allowing the disability to define me. As a toddler, my son asks questions about why I have crutches and he occasionally questions my impairment, although it does not appear that he sees disability preventing me from an active lifestyle.

Using developmental psychology’s stages of development as a framework, the evolution of relationships relates to the theory’s early adulthood stage (Rogoff, 2003). It was during early adulthood when relationships with my college roommate, my wife, and my son evolved. It is during this stage when intimate relationships are formed with friends and mates. Establishing these relationships may be difficult if previous stages are not resolved, resulting in potential isolation, fear of commitment, and an inability to depend upon others (Rogoff, 2003). I was able to avoid isolation through establishing early adulthood relationships that prevented fear of commitment (e.g., I married and had a child with my wife) and an inability to depend upon others (e.g., I relied upon my roommate for actions such as carrying a laundry basket and grocery shopping). These relationships matured in my early adulthood stage, although relationships that began prior to that stopped maturing.

Parental Influence

Ironically, it is relationships with the people closest to me over the duration of my life — my mother and grandparents — that have had difficulty in maturing beyond a focus on physical characteristics. My mother and father challenged the small-town elementary school at which officials insisted I be placed in special education classes. Another student my age with CP also was entering the school. Her CP affected her cognitive abilities, and she was placed in the school’s special education class. It took a meeting between

my parents, me, and the school principal before convincing officials CP did not affect my learning capacity. I was allowed to enroll in the “regular” kindergarten class, if one could accurately define “regular.”

My father fought concern from local golf course professionals about how my golf spikes and crutches would tear up their greens and tee boxes due to my style of walking. The professionals were concerned that the way in which my feet moved when I walked could rip apart the manicured grass and the pressure I placed on my crutches would leave indentations in the greens. When I play, I place my weight on my right crutch and swing a club in my left hand. We were never a family that had full working knowledge of the laws of equality and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Yet my father was able to convince golf professionals at my hometown course that denying my right to play golf was not legally possible.

My parents never accepted the word “can’t” from me, so they were not apt to accept it from others. They encouraged me to attempt anything I desired. I was a member of a t-ball team, a youth baseball team, and two basketball teams albeit as manager and scorekeeper. My parents came to every game. My grandparents were equally supportive in my formative years. My maternal grandparents worked when I was an adolescent, but were never too exhausted for a game of baseball in the front lawn. We used a tennis ball so as not to destroy my aluminum crutch when contact was made. My grandfather was the pitcher and my grandmother the catcher as I swung with my left crutch as a pseudo bat.

I moved two hours away from home to attend college, and eventually moved five hours away to begin my professional career, during which the umbrella of protection from my family was removed. Yet traces of doubt from my family remain and sometimes appear to have increased since leaving home. When I return for family visits, I “can’t” wash my grandmother’s dishes because I will get too tired. I “can’t” clean the floor there because I am not able. I “can’t” wash my own vehicle when I go for a visit because I never did it myself when I was a youth, although I washed my car in college every week, alone, in the parking lot, sometimes on my knees scrubbing wheels. I “can’t” prepare my own dinner, my own plate, or my own drink when it is time for family meals, although I did as much throughout college and currently help my wife with meals in some capacity.

Reverting to a time when my family dictated what I could and could not do (e.g., external locus of control) may be their way of holding on to the past. However, since I moved out of my childhood home, my life has changed so dramatically that my mother and grandparents may not recognize it were it not for me sharing my stories. My college years were influential in formulating my identity because I was alone and without the cushion of immediate family support. More importantly, I was challenged. My professional years working in a large city in the Southeastern United States forced me to become more aggressive and direct, which is to be expected along any natural progression of a young

professional. However, I also began embracing my identity as a person with a disability.

Similar to relationships with my spouse, son, and college roommate, evolving relationships with my mother and grandparents relate to developmental psychology's stages of development. While I progressed professionally and socially into the early adulthood stage, my family continued to perceive me in the adolescence stage. The adolescence stage of development occurs between puberty and a full commitment to an adult social role in the working world (Rogoff, 2003). During this time, the individual begins to explore himself or herself by asking questions such as "Who am I?" and "Who do I want to be?" (Rogoff, 2003). Role confusion may prevent one from moving into the early adulthood stage, or in this case prevent my family's perception of my own movement out of the adolescence stage. When my mother prepares my plate of food for me at her home or my grandmother refuses to allow me to wash dishes because she perceives me to be unable, they are maintaining my place in the adolescence stage, a stage I was in the last time I lived under their supervision. I am firmly in early adulthood stage in my life, and have accepted commitment and social roles that identify with the stage.

Defining Self

I did not participate actively in accessible sports such as downhill snow skiing, water skiing, and handcycling until I was 30 years old. Within two years of being introduced to those three activities, I had snow skied twice in Aspen, Colo., water skied seven times, and purchased a racing handcycle to train with a U.S. national champion competitor. Participation in those activities and planning budgets and vacations around opportunities to participate became part of the fabric of my life. I am not at a competitive level in any of the activities, but I can claim to be recreationally fluent in all three.

Family support in this aspect has been critical. My mother and grandparents have babysat as we travel for recreational activities across the country and made extra time to spend at nearby lakes. They have listened to stories and stared at photographs as I try to relive my moments on the snow or in the water. However, they do not ask the question, "How do you do that?" which is the first reaction most have when I share my experiences. They also have not watched me participate in these activities. Having not experienced these activities with me or seen me participate may explain their difficulties in accepting me in the early adulthood stage. Yet it is these activities that now define much of my life.

I can explain the thrill of leaning forward off the ski lift, turning right, and then swishing down Big Burn at the top of Snowmass Mountain, the steepest blue trail I have encountered in my limited snow skiing experience. The adaptive snow ski is primitive, made of fiberglass that is painted and stamped with stickers. I am strapped in four times with Velcro belts. I use shortened crutches with tiny skis at the end, which transform them into outriggers. I can explain the difficulties of squeezing my body into the cage of an adaptive

water ski. It takes two people to help me push my backside into the seat of the ski, one to hold the equipment from the back and one to push me into the seat and then maneuver my bare feet into the tight, rubber foot harness. The cage is nothing more than padded bars molded into a strangely-shaped seat and bolted onto an extra-wide water ski. I use the water skiing version of outriggers, which are two skies on each side to provide balance. I know that I use a size 15 cage bolted three holes back on the board, and I use a rope with a ball so it remains hooked to the ski unless I can reach the rope and steer myself. Finally, I can explain why I spent more on the purchase of my handcycle than on my wife's engagement ring. It is a delicate piece of equipment, as I found out on my second ride when my turn radius was too wide, I hit a curb, popped my front tire, and destroyed my wheel. There are 27 gears on my bike, just like many other racing bicycles. There is an amazing amount of control when adjusting for camber, tire pressure, gearing, and other intricacies of which I am unfamiliar. My cycling mentor, from whom I purchased the bike, is a two-time national champion handcyclist who travels across the United States for competitions and has trained at the U.S. Paralympic facility in Colorado Springs, Colo. It is simple to get on the bike, but difficult to get off. I need help getting my feet from the foot harnesses, then slide off the side of the bike and onto the ground without the bike tipping over. I turn my body belly-down to move onto my knees and then maneuver myself into standing position.

The cultures of snow skiing, water skiing and handcycling have shaped my identity more in two years than anything I have ever done. They have shown me that I can participate in sport and physical activities that I once thought impossible. I can explain the effect each activity has had on my life, but it is nothing like the experience. When presented the opportunity to participate, the easy decision would have been to decline and keep my life safe and low-risk. I could have declined the opportunity to ski down a world famous mountain of snow or water ski on five different lakes or bike ride with a national champion. Had I defaulted to the "that's not possible" excuse, my disability would have defined me only because I would be allowing such. Instead, I chose to define my disability.

My personal challenge with internal locus of control with regard to my abilities relates to dialogical self theory (Hermans, 2010). The theory brings the notion of self by William James and George Herbert Mead together with the notion of dialogue by Mikhail Bakhtin (Hermans, 2010). By redefining self through participation in sport and physical activity, I took on the role of self-as-knower as described by Hermans (2001). My connections with the disability community were limited throughout my life, but my roles in adaptive sport better connected me with other individuals with physical impairments, many of whom had impairments that could be considered medically worse than mine. Therefore, I encountered individuality from within my own small disability communities because I was among the few ambulatory participants. I also encountered distinctness from others in my peer groups of able-bodied individuals as perhaps the only person with a disability and therefore the only participant in adaptive sport. Accepting the self-as-knower role,

I willingly made choices that dictated outcomes. I chose to participate in the adaptive sports for the internal gratification and for the external message it may reveal: people with disabilities can participate in extreme activities.

The Difficulty of Change

The purpose of this auto-ethnography was to reveal how instrumental life situations for a person with a physical disability present opportunities to define disability, rather than allowing disability to define the individual. I have identified instrumental life situations that capture how I have sought greater control of my life and how others appear to perceive me as a person with a physical impairment. I have attempted to use four theories that explain these instrumental life situations as they relate to seizing internal locus of control. These instrumental life situations and four theories can be categorized by (1) Building Relationships and Acceptance; (2) Evolving Relationships; and (3) Defining Self.

I will begin with Building Relationships and Acceptance. My working relationships remain professional due to colleagues and students whom I teach acting rational and considering implications before engaging in behavior such as questions about my physical impairment or making assumptions about my abilities, holding to the theory of reasoned action. Perhaps this is due to the educational setting and one that is diverse and welcoming to differences. College encourages challenging thoughts, but doing so on an academic level with positioned statements rather than blurting out the first thought or question that comes to mind. Conversely, my own perceptions of how I am accepted fit within self-categorization theory. My personal identity, as described in the theory, sets me apart from my peers professionally and socially as I am often the only person with a physical impairment within my social communities. My social identity, however, displays how I successfully portray characteristics aside from my physical impairment and am accepted into social categories such as the golf team, the group of college instructors, or a set of friends. With social identity, I am able to fit in without my physical impairment being the focus.

Next is the category of Evolving Relationships. From my current relationships, categorical walls may include disability but disability may not be the primary qualifier. I have attempted to define myself as a husband, father, student, instructor, researcher, group leader, writer, editor, and numerous other roles that I may not know. Participating in multiple communities reduces my outsider viewpoint and enhances my insider perspective, which can increase understanding of others (Rogoff, 2003). In those communities, physical impairment is not the primary quality I present for the group. To my wife, I am not the husband with a disability. To my son, I am not the disabled dad. To my colleagues, I am not the researcher or group leader with crutches. Quite simply, in the majority of those community roles, I am known for my abilities to love, decide, lead, find, distribute, and provide, none of which has to do with my physical impairment. These evolving relation-

ships set me in the early adulthood stage of developmental psychology, where intimate relationships are formed, therefore avoiding fear of commitment and isolation (Rogoff, 2003).

Conversely, those family relationships that have developed since birth appeared to pause when I moved out of my parents' home. My mother and grandparents rely on stories of my achievements. At the time of this writing, they had not seen me snow ski, water ski, or handcycle, therefore they had not transitioned their perceptions of me from the adolescent stage of development to early adulthood, relating back to developmental psychology. Many relationships in my life began in life stages during which I was operating as an independent adult; they were established when dependence upon someone or something for basic needs — food, shelter, social well-being — was nonexistent. I controlled my life when those relationships began (internal locus of control). For my parents and grandparents, they controlled my life when our relationship began (external locus of control). Therefore, the external locus of control kept me perceived to be in a role of adolescence on their eyes, and it has become an unrealistic expectation for them to shift perceptions of my abilities to early adulthood. This difficulty in shifting stages of development may hold true for several adults, no matter the level of ability, with regard to their family relationships. I argue that it is enhanced, however, for people with physical impairments due to the overprotective nature of a parent or grandparent who raised a child with a disability. Accepting that a dependent child has transformed into an independent adult has proved to be difficult and perhaps unattainable. I use my own family as an example not to chastise them for not conforming to my changing lifestyle, but to shed light on how difficult changing perceptions of disability over long periods of time can be even for the closest family members. Parents of children with disabilities should adhere to the changing expectations their child has of himself or herself. As the individual gains independency, parents should mirror that with encouragement or greater support rather than oppression.

Too many times adults with disabilities become complacent with their disability defining them and the roles they play throughout their lives. I use my own family as an example because it is often the family where this mind-set can harbor. Without the challenge or encouragement from my family at a young age, my experiences may have never been launched. Not transitioning their understanding of my ability has been exposed as my own definition of ability has advanced. Yet my own advancement would have never moved without roots of hope and possibility planted by my mother, my father who has since died, and three grandparents. Others may not be as fortunate. Still, a challenge lies in transforming established perceptions and beliefs. I chose to accept the self-as-knower role in dialogical self theory (Hermans, 2001, 2010). Embracing the opportunity for personal volition in participation is empowering and affects outlook in everyday life activities. Rather than depending upon others, choosing to take on personal challenges such as adaptive sport has allowed me to become more independent in my thinking and outlook in all aspects of life.

Discussion

As a person with a physical disability, perceptions are part of my life. Immediate perceptions must range the gamut when others first encounter me, and I am not naïve enough to believe I understand them nor am I in position to criticize them. It is natural for individuals to try to categorize and connect information to explain the unknown. We categorize people by gender, race, ethnicity, and ability, amongst other things, particularly in regard to minorities: the white basketball player, the black news anchor, the Mormon presidential candidate, the male hairdresser, or the disabled person. Why does the precursor (e.g., white, black, Mormon, male, disabled) have to be there? Does it add importance to the story? Should it be eliminated? These questions can only be addressed at a situational level, but should be at the very least considered by individuals in their discussions and activities. Once those categorical walls are constructed, they become difficult to shed. Eliminating descriptors may be the first step in eliminating damaging attitudes and actions toward minority populations (Patterson and Witten, 1987).

No matter the achievement, lifestyle change, or attitude adjustment by the individual with a disability, words are not enough to change others' perceptions. Actions alone are not enough, either. Consistent action of taking ownership in one's disability — or ability — may help shape internal and external perceptions. There have been and will continue to be countless times in my life when I could have opted for "I can't" and the opportunity would have passed by, but instead chose to redefine disability as it pertains to my life. Therefore, to challenge established perceptions, it is essential for the person with a physical impairment to seek control by defining disability before it defines them.

Auto-ethnographic Writing

The challenges in writing this auto-ethnography included the management of emotion and its relation to the research, maintaining a voice that may introduce a new view of the disability issue to others, and presenting a factual portrayal of my experiences. Ellis (1993) acknowledges similar challenges in her auto-ethnography of experiencing her brother's sudden death. Addressing such topics as family members' inability to change perceptions of my abilities were approached in the most objective manner I could offer to prevent unsuspecting emotion from weaving its way into this writing. While emotion is an important quality of auto-ethnography (Creswell, 2007; Ellis, 1993), I attempted to prevent feelings from clouding my judgment as a researcher in analyzing the "why" behind actions and perceptions. Similarly, I attempted to recount my experiences from a factual recall. For each vignette provided, I asked myself if a third party could discover much of this same information through conversations with others or in-depth investigation. However valid it may be, this attempt at providing factual information kept me grounded in representation,

objectivity, data quality, legitimacy, and ethics, all areas of concern for auto-ethnography as described by Wall (2008).

Like Ellis, my goal was to expose a topic to stimulate discussion from a fresh perspective. Disability is not a new topic of study, but first-person accounts of how disability affects one's own experiences presents a unique opportunity to compare and contrast the experiences of others. As Ellis (1993) explains, "the 'truth' of this story then lies in the way it is told and the possibility that there are others in the world who resonate with this experience" (p. 725). I am not naïve to believe someone else's experiences are the same as mine, as generalizing these experiences is a limitation of auto-ethnography (McIlveen, 2008). However, sharing my experiences may create a position to which others may relate with regard to perception and disability.

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Editorial — Gateways and ghost estates:

Signifying Irish national identity after the Celtic Tiger era

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Abstract

Ireland has seen unprecedented growth in the last decade, resulting in an array of new architecture. Architecture has been reviewed throughout history as one of the best methods of understanding the society that produced it. How have recent construction projects in Ireland reflected our society and sense of national identity? This paper attempts to clarify the role of urban iconography in communication, and to look at how contemporary Ireland might be interpreted through our most recent examples. Taking ghost estates and ‘landmark developments’ as key features of Ireland’s architectural legacy, I hope to examine how closely these built forms represent Irish society after the Celtic Tiger era.

If semiotics, beyond being the science of recognised systems of signs, is really to be a science studying all cultural phenomena as if they were systems of signs — on the hypothesis that all cultural phenomena are, in reality, systems of signs, or that culture can be understood as communication — then one of the fields in which it will undoubtedly find itself most challenged is that of architecture.

— **Umberto Eco** 2000, p. 182

The Celtic Tiger is the name given to the recent period of prosperity in Ireland. This unprecedented economic growth gave rise to enormous changes in Irish society. In a relatively short space of time, Ireland had become the poster child for economic success in the EU, following decades of high unemployment. Foreign investment, an expanding

services sector and — perhaps most significantly — a prosperous property market, all contributed to Ireland's improved fortunes.

“National identity, in this view, is not a natural attribute that precedes statehood, but a process” [Vale 1992, p45]. The last two decades have seen enormous change in Ireland, and this had a profound effect on the Irish sense of self; one which is still evolving. A wave of construction swept through the country — housing estates, large retail developments, and for the first time in Irish history, a push towards high-rise development. In 2006, Alan Mee, director of the Urban Design Masters programme at University College Dublin, described Ireland's development: “We're on a trajectory from farms to tower blocks with no stop in between.” [Cullinan 2006] In some cases, this resulted in architecture of a truly exemplary standard. There seemed to be a sense in the country that Irish cities could now compare favourably with any international counterpart: “These days it's not so outlandish to compare Dublin with other European cities...Recently, respected US business magazine *Forbes* rated Dublin the fifth-most-important city in Europe for doing business, ranking it alongside the likes of London, Amsterdam and Helsinki.”[O'Halloran 2007] However in 2008, the ‘bubble’ burst. In simple terms, the banking sector had over-extended itself — primarily in the form of loans to property developers. As is often the case in recessions, the construction industry was one of the first to feel the effects of tightening constraints. Due to the scale of construction works — both recently completed and in progress — at the time it was doubly clear that things had changed. Construction sites were abandoned leaving half completed properties and commercial units scattered around the country. ‘Landmark developments’ remained tenantless long after the fanfare of their arrival had ended. By mid 2009 unemployment in Ireland had risen to 12 per cent, over double of what it had been a year previously [Kirby 2010].

One of the first questions to be addressed in relation to architecture during the last twenty years or so is what, if anything, it has to say about the economic and social changes that allowed much of it to be produced. In order to begin answering this question I would draw attention to an essay by semiotician Umberto Eco. In ‘Function and Sign: The semiotics of architecture’ Eco discusses the ability of architecture to communicate: “The spoon promotes a certain way of eating, and signifies that way of eating, just as the cave promotes the act of taking shelter and signifies the existence of the possible functions; and both objects signify even when they are not being used...” [Eco 2000, p183] What I am trying to highlight in this context is that architecture carries meaning. Sometimes this meaning is implicit and it is always open to alternative interpretations, but the forms buildings take and the functions they are intended to serve do speak to us about why they were built.

Historically speaking the role of urban iconography in Ireland has been significant. Following the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922, a ‘Celtic Revival’ of art and culture was used to re-appropriate Colonial urban artefacts. The Celtic Revival was notable ar-

chitecturally for its use of Celtic symbolism-such as intricate interlace patterns- and monumental depictions of figures from Irish history and folklore. “[V]arious aspects of the urban landscape did play a significant role in marking the transition from the colonial to the post-colonial” [Whelan 2001, p135]. This suggests a tradition in Ireland of using visual communication to convey societal change.

It may not be possible to characterise the architecture of the Celtic Tiger period as a building typology in and of itself. However, it has become commonplace to refer to construction projects of this period under the same umbrella. Renowned architecture critic JR Curtis was scathing in his appraisal of Ireland’s recent output in his essay for the AAI [Architectural Association of Ireland] Awards 2011 catalogue. In his view the ‘boom’ had a very tangible impact on the type of architecture being produced: “The wreckage and vulgarisation are there for all to see in everything from gated communities and mansions on open land that look as if they have been cribbed from soap operas on American TV to silly downtown ‘iconic’ landmarks that interrupt the urban scale. In the middle of this orgy of mediocrity and fast money, there are several fine interventions, often tucked away down mews lanes or else inserted in the spaces left over from convent gardens or lunatic asylums.” [McDonald 2011]. It seems that there is an overarching similarity in much of the building work of the last twenty years which is not just formal or functional. I believe that this unifying principle is in the ideology of those involved in producing these buildings. While describing the varieties of architectural code — the ways architecture can be classified — Eco makes the point that architecture is a business: “...but the architect cannot be engaged in the practice of architecture without inserting himself into a given economy and technology and trying to embrace the logic he finds there, even when he would like to contest it...” [Eco 2000, p196] This article is not intended as a defence or vilification of the construction industry, but I feel it is important to realise that architecture is always dependent on external factors. I would argue that the Celtic Tiger era produced external factors that were unique in Irish history. This has resulted in an environment where reframing national identity seemed both natural and logical.

Landmark development- gateways to the future

Architecturally speaking the Celtic Tiger era was in many ways the story of Irish introspection and extroversion. With budget surpluses holding steady, policy makers looked inwards to address our planning difficulties. The density question and how we compared to international standards became a serious issue for the construction industry. On the other hand, Ireland had done well from foreign investment and the government was keen to garner more. This meant that Ireland had to be seen to be everything that a multinational corporation could want in a European headquarters. These two concepts — creating higher density and inventing cosmopolitan European cities — merged in the form of the

landmark development.

The difficulty with achieving higher densities in the city is that Irish people remain reluctant to view apartments as feasible long-term residences. There are a number of reasons for this. The first is Ireland's poor track record with apartment design. The perception among the public was that apartments were short term accommodation. The result was that apartment design was often of a very poor standard. In 2007, UCD [University College Dublin] Department of Planning and Environmental Policy conducted a survey of residents in apartments in Dublin City. Issues identified included: lack of open space, lack of storage, poor sound insulation and poor layout.

Indeed, criticism of high-rise residential apartments seems to have come from all sectors. Most tellingly perhaps were comments from Dick Roche, Minister for the Environment from September 2004 until June 2007: "We have seen failures in the past in the huge soulless housing estates on the edges of some of our towns and cities, or the Corbusier-style housing project that just didn't work in Ballymun, and which is now being replaced at enormous cost" [Cullinan 2007]. The comparison between the Ballymun tower blocks and Le Corbusier's Unités is unfortunate. It does somewhat explain our failure to embrace high-rise structures. Though looking to international models and examples of excellence, the interpretation in places like Ballymun was based on a misunderstanding of what these structures were. The point of the Unité was that it worked as a vertical town with amenities like shops and cafes and a gym, which were intended to socialise the community. The Ballymun flats were poor quality apartment blocks with inadequate facilities. Yet I feel this misconception that Ballymun has defined apartment living, had a long, damaging legacy.

This brings us to the second issue with Irish perceptions of apartment living. Journalist Gary Quinn eloquently summarised the relationship between apartments and class: "[A]partment living here is really all about class. We like to dress it up and talk about the loss of our gardens and our innate link to the land but really we just don't want to be seen as common" [Quinn 2007]. Again, I feel that this ties into the fact that the quality of apartments in Ireland was quite low. Unfortunately the apartment has come to embody the poor living standards that those on lower incomes are often forced to accept.

The UCD survey found that 77 per cent of residents felt they were either likely or very likely to move residence in the following five years [Dublin City Council 2007, p5]. This statistic backs up the commonly held belief that the apartment is merely a short-term accommodation: "Unlike our continental European cousins we have cultural attachments to being kings in our castles; how else can one explain the proliferation of one-off houses in the countryside, removed from basic services in towns and villages?" [McDonald 2007].

The Celtic Tiger became the age of the high-rise, and local authorities were determined to reframe the public's perception. Dublin City Council went some way to doing this with the publication of new guidelines for new apartment buildings in 2007. 'Achieving Liveable Sustainable New Apartment Homes for Dublin City' set out recommendations

for minimum floor areas and access to amenities. Skyscraper developments began to appear, being hailed as examples of international excellence and luxury. Apartment blocks were now spacious enough to accommodate growing families. It is clear in the way that many of these developments were marketed and in the emphasis on their modern international style aesthetic that the form was particularly important. The aesthetics helped to reinforce the perception that these ‘landmark’ buildings would cement Ireland’s position internationally. These would create a new vision of Ireland as both cosmopolitan and global.

Indeed, internationalism was one of the most conspicuous effects of the Celtic Tiger. For many the ‘Celtic Tiger’ was primarily the product of globalisation reaching Ireland. Respected economist Fred Gottheil questioned the true nature of the ‘boom years’ in his 2003 article, ‘Ireland: What’s Celtic about the Celtic Tiger?’ He suggests that the influence of foreign investment — especially American firms operating in Ireland - on the Irish economy was more significant than home grown innovation. “What was really Irish about Ireland’s economic performance? That is to say, was it really a Celtic Tiger at work in Ireland or a US tiger caged in a Celtic zoo?” [Kirby 2010, pp.148-9]. Regardless of its true nature, the Celtic Tiger gave Ireland cause for optimism.

Architecturally speaking, the confidence that was prevailing in the Irish psyche translated into developments described as aspirational and iconic. The race to build ever taller towers among key developers gave physical expression to the national reaching for the sky. One of the most publicised of these was The Elysian in Cork City.

The Elysian — ‘beacon’ and ‘eyesore’

In many ways, the story of the Elysian is the story of the Celtic Tiger. Lacking the controversy of other landmark developments — notably those planned by figures like Sean Dunne and Bono in Dublin — the Elysian largely went unnoticed until it was crowned as Ireland’s tallest residential building. This landmark role was celebrated by developers O’Flynn Construction: “The brief was simple, create a landmark building for Cork which shows the positive energy of its inhabitants, make it a showpiece for the way City Centre development should go” [www.theelysian.ie] It seems the building was expected to embody all the characteristics of the Celtic Tiger in urban Ireland. It was physically and symbolically like a beacon over the city.

Designed by Wilson Architects, an award winning Irish practice, the development’s appearance was described as taking its influence from major European urban centres, especially London’s Docklands. The ability to define the Elysian as being of an international standard was obviously very significant. One of the roles assigned to the Elysian project was to act as a gateway to Cork City for visitors arriving from the airport. The development’s tower

was to act as signifier of the city and its people. Therefore a design synonymous with European urbanity would be legible shorthand for 'International city centre'.

In my opinion, the Elysian development is not the most attractive addition to the city. It certainly does not compare favourably to the neighbouring extension to City Hall by ABK Architects or the nearby Cork School of Music by Murray O'Laoire, to name two other Celtic Tiger era projects. Yet its presence in the city is unique; it hangs over the skyline towering above its surroundings, unquestionably a landmark.

The apartments in the complex were aimed at the upper end of the market. Prices ranged from €375,000 for a one-bed apartment to €2m for a three-level penthouse. However, its launch in September 2008 coincided with increasing stock market fluctuations. This marked the beginnings of the property crash — the development has yet to recover from this bad timing. Eighty-five per cent of the retail and residential units are currently unoccupied. By night, few lights can be seen within the Elysian making it not so much 'like a beacon' as a shadow over the city. By early 2009, only 25 of the 211 units had been sold. The development has become a very different kind of symbol in the intervening period: "With the advertising bunting long since taken down, locals, in reference to a nearby bar called the Idle Hour, began to rename the Elysian the "Idle Tower" [O'Connell 2011].

In this regard, the Elysian is particularly interesting, acting both as a landmark and as a ghost estate. The distinction between The Elysian and other vacant developments is that it promised a new vision of Irish urbanity. Ghost developments almost always describe rural or suburban ideals and generally have nothing to say about progress. In contrast, the Elysian was to be an example to follow but became instead the embodiment of the economic downturn. This transformation makes it a far more potent symbol, because it was intended to be a signifier of Cork and Ireland. Situated at the edge of the city's docklands, it was to be one of many tall landmark structures in a large-scale redevelopment of the area. However, in the wake of the recession these plans have halted, leaving the Elysian completely out of context with its surroundings. The issue with the promise of the new is how to reconcile the image of the future with what already exists. The Elysian is a significant intervention which some locals have not welcomed. Its presence has come to signify some of the negative aspects of post Celtic Tiger era Ireland. One resident described it as follows: "Fifty years ago, it was a little community here and everybody knew everybody and was there to help. You miss that now. It is a white elephant. It was terrible it was built, really. I have no problem with development — it's the scale I don't like" [O'Connell 2011].

Some people remain hopeful however. In the quality of the development and the image it paints of modern Ireland, the Elysian can possibly be seen as a monument to a future that may still be possible. Though there is certainly room for criticism, those who live with the landmark are optimistic. The owner of one of the commercial units believes things will change for The Elysian; "The way I had envisaged this place originally, which tied in

with the developer's vision for it, it would have been a dream...It is never going to go back to the way it was or get the money they would have gotten in 2008. I do see it turning, though, and people moving in here" [O'Connell 2011].

Symbols are always open to individual interpretation. Similarly, one's view of 'modern Ireland' can be coloured by one's attitude to development and community. Though progress should be embraced, it is important to recognise the value of local communities to urban richness. With Ireland becoming more multicultural and attempting to achieve international standards, we need to recognise that higher density does not equate to stronger communities. Development needs to happen in response to local communities. These are the people who live with landmark architecture and regardless of what our international image may be, it is their support which is most important.

Ghost estates- tradition and the Irish psyche

The perception in Ireland has always been that families live in houses. Apartments are acceptable for the young and single, but children need front and back gardens. Despite attempts from architects, planners and developers to sell the apartment lifestyle to families, the traditional image largely remains the same. Frank McDonald, Environment Editor with *The Irish Times*, described how in 2007, the then Lord Mayor of Dublin Paddy Burke summed up the situation at a Dublin City Council conference on urban sprawl: "there was something in the Irish psyche that made it impossible to imagine raising a family in an apartment. What people want, the Lord Mayor told everyone, was a house their own with a front and back garden where kids could play safely. Even tenants in inner city Corpo [Corporation or social housing] flat complexes, many of whom raised children there, aspired to having a house in the suburbs, he said" [McDonald 2007].

The result — according to a Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government survey carried out in autumn 2010 — is 33,226 houses that are either complete or near complete and vacant [Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2011, p2]. The same survey found that 78,195 houses were complete and occupied. This demonstrates the scale of development in predominantly rural and suburban areas.

A number of factors converged to create these developments including traditional values, lax planning decisions and greed. The ghost estate has come to symbolise much of what was negative about the Celtic Tiger period. In my opinion, there are two principle issues here. One is that this type of development was built at all; reflecting the demand for traditional houses regardless of design merit. The other is that so many of these developments were allowed to be constructed. That the housing estate proliferated to the extent it did is telling. Developers are business men and, as such, are keenly aware of what the market wants. Again I am reminded of the Umberto Eco reference to architects having to work within external factors.

Money was the driving force in the spread of housing estates. As house prices in Ireland's cities continued to increase, families determined to have a suburban lifestyle looked to neighbouring counties. Dublin's 'commuter belt' in particular saw the impact of this migration. The extent to which this was seen as a national issue is evident in the fact that *The Irish Times* produced an eight part series investigating the impact on 'commuter counties'.

In the years 1997 to 2003 Carlow's urban population grew from 17,000 to 22,000 [Sheridan 2003a]. In the same period Ratoath, a small Co. Meath village, saw its population rise by 82.3 per cent [Sheridan 2003b]. It appears that the payback for commuting was the idea of a better life. The move from the city to the country was a move away from all the negative issues associated with urban life and towards an idyll. "In countless cases, there are deeper motives...worries about children being enmeshed in rampant anti-social gangs; the woman too terrorised to walk to the shops or get a bus; the family devastated by the new neighbours from hell; schools so poor in every sense that even the teachers are bailing out" [Sheridan 2003c]. The idea of a rural or suburban life seems to have been a powerful incentive. However, in many cases the reality could not meet these expectations. Lack of amenities was central to this, as smaller towns and villages saw their hinterland expand beyond their ability to cater for them. As Kathy Sheridan reported; "The question is, where will it all end? "With all their talk of 'facilities' and 'amenities' and big roads and fancy shops and developments, you'd have to wonder what they're looking for here," says a "country" man. "Do they really want to live in the country — or will they never rest until they have Dublin down here with them?" [Sheridan 2003c].

Very few of the housing developments constructed during this era were of any real architectural value. Architecture had very little to do with the spread of housing estates, what mattered was what they represented. Today, the design of these estates is perhaps equally irrelevant when compared to their symbolism. The Reendesert estate in Ballylickey in West Cork is described as being "in keeping with the quaint charm of the village" [Madden 2011]. However this vacant development is now recognised as "an eyesore" by locals, a fact evident to those who visit the village. "Consecutive Tidy Towns reports document the development of the estate over the years, from its promising early days to its current "sad and unfortunate" state. In 2010, the judges noted that the local residents' "causes of frustration are clearly etched onto the landscape" [Madden 2011].

Despite higher densities and a variety of dwelling types, the development of new towns outside Dublin city, like Adamstown and Clongriffin, represent much the same ideology as ghost estates. I am making this classification primarily on the basis of location. Situated outside the city, these developments were seen to be removed from urban problems. However these were much larger developments that were intended to include adequate infrastructure for a large population. Also, in terms of design, these developments were intended to be 'European' in feel rather than the more traditional housing estates. Speaking of Adamstown, Niall Toner gave this description: "Visually at least, the place has more

in common with a post-war European-style suburb than a Dublin one” [Toner 2010, p10]. Though still housing only one-tenth of its projected population, Adamstown has been quite successful in fostering a sense of community through the provision of infrastructure. Jude Byrne, chief project manager at Adamstown for developers Castlethorn Construction described their long-term vision for the development: “Adamstown is not just about starter homes. The intention is to provide homes for growing families then later on the area will cater for older people and we intend to have the medical services in place to back that up” [Toner 2010, p11]. Indeed the positive aspects of this development arise from its designation as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). This meant that planning permission for residential development would only be granted if adequate social and economic infrastructure was in place. This was described by journalist Niall Toner as “an alternative to the traditional “nod-and-a-wink” approach of Irish developers” [Toner 2010, p11]. Perhaps that was where the true success lies.

Rebuilding — after the Celtic Tiger era

The architecture produced during the Celtic Tiger era rendered visible prevailing attitudes in Irish society during this period. Just as post-Independence Irish architecture was marked by Celtic symbolism, Celtic Tiger era architecture is notable for its scale and international feel. There are a number of categories which encapsulate Celtic Tiger architecture — the landmark development; residential, commercial or cultural; the high density residential development, and the housing estate.

The key issues during the Celtic Tiger centred on how Ireland would progress. How would we be seen by the world? How would we face the challenges of population growth and multiculturalism sustainably? Much of the debate over the last two decades focused on density and how to achieve sustainable urban populations as Irish cities continued to expand. As a result, this period drew into sharp relief the urban-rural divide. The boundary between the thinking here can be seen in the types of development produced in both settings. Cities and urban centres were the sites of landmark architecture, and high-rise development. Rural and suburban areas continued to be the stronghold of housing estates which were built at an unprecedented rate. Developers, planners and architects were determined to convince people of the benefits of apartment life. Yet the Irish remained largely reluctant to accept that apartments could be long-term family homes. Perception has arguably never been so important.

So have our attitudes changed? In some ways I think they have; we began to embrace globalised ‘norms’ more easily. We started to look international examples and see a way to emulate them. We got a glimpse of the progress we are capable of making towards high standard infrastructure, and have come to expect more. However, we are still some distance from accepting high density as the only viable solution for the future. That so many hous-

ing estates were built is testament to this fact and to the weakness of many local planning authorities. Perhaps the legacy of the Celtic Tiger will be a positive one. From the debris of the property market we may build a sustainable future where everyone has access to good design and adequate amenities. In conclusion, I am reminded of a project by artist Emma Houlihan: [http://www.leitrimsculpturecentre.ie/programme/exhibitions/exb_residency_emmaandtony.htm] While in residence in a Leitrim arts centre, Houlihan took an interest in the many ghost estates in the county. She questioned what was going to happen to all the rubble from houses that had to be demolished. Taking the rubble from a demolished house she recast it to form the blocks [voussoirs] of an arch. The arch is now on exhibition as a deconstructed pile of debris, yet implicit within it is the possibility that it can be rebuilt. This is a moral for us and for those who plan our cities, towns and countryside. Though we may now seem to be irreparably damaged we can rebuild; but it will take time, courage and an open mind. Ireland will build again. What we build, only time will tell.

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Editorial — Migrant theatre and the aesthetics of identity

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Abstract

Looking at the terminology developed by criticism to analyze the diverse sociocultural contexts and the various historical phases of literature over the past twenty years, we cannot ignore the emergence of a vast geographical concern. Notions such as nomadism, exile or deterritorialization are multiplying. They all reflect a modern need to explain the major changes experienced by human beings. Spaces are multiplying, expanding, or even existing virtually and it is becoming difficult to define a new sense of being in the world. At the same time, the notion of identity has become more vague, either rendered in simplistic terms or opened to multiple interpretations. The ever-changing notion of character in contemporary theatre represents a precious tool to analyse the multiple notions of identity. In this publication, I offer to demonstrate how Migrant theatre, a dramaturgy based on the inadequacy between human beings and the spaces they live in, deals with identity in postmodern terms. Oscillating between a perfect neatness and an embarrassing vagueness, this new theatre, represented by the works of playwrights such as Marie Ndiaye (*Rien d'humain*) or Abia Farhoud (*Les Filles du 5-10-15c*), outlines the hesitations, the confrontations and the experimentations of the world that surrounds us and that shapes us.

The world is filled with terms like 'national identity', 'cultural identity' and 'political identity'; all pointing to a collective dimension, while the word identity still refers to a notion of uniqueness. To overcome this initial contradiction, I propose to create a firm, though possibly reductive, analytical framework. Nowadays, identity is perceived as resulting from multiple constructions and strategies, "not a fact but a dynamic" (Camilleri, 1996-1997, p.32). However, this post modern concept of a fragmented identity remains theoretical and does not take into consideration the daily pressure experienced by those experimenting with a profound change in their own identity. This is particularly the case for migrants, who are constantly trying to link what they were *back home* with what they are becoming *over here*. In the specific case of *migrance* (Smith, 2006), the difficulty with defining one's identity could be reduced to two main factors : firstly, living in a world that is constantly and rapidly changing, or in places that are non-concentric and discontinuous, weakens the sense of being rooted in one identifiable place. As David Kolb (2007) explains, "there is a *spaciousness* about our inhabitation (of the world) that forbids solid identity." Therefore identity must be considered in relation to space. Secondly, contemporary Western society constantly demands us to define ourselves through the paragon of the white male: eternally young, thoroughly active and belonging to the middle-classes. As new members of

society, migrants are particularly sensitive to the model of *whiteness*, otherwise perceived as both neutral and normative by Westerners. Thus identity must also be considered in relation to society.

In their respective plays, Farhoud and NDiaye work on the implications of a multiple identity. They do so by focusing on characters who are subject to a fundamental instability, whether it be the consequences of a physical displacement from one socio-cultural sphere to another in Farhoud's *Les filles du 5-10-15c* (referred to as *LF51015*) or the inclination of the character to feel out of place in an environment that should be familiar in NDiaye's *Rien d'humain* (referred to as *RDH*). First of all, I would like to demonstrate that theatre has specific ways of exploring the concept of identity. Then I offer to concentrate on the way both authors highlight the subtle connection between space and identity by using the techniques of migrant writing, a theatrical form built upon "a sense of dislocation, of feeling foreign and out of place, longing for what is familiar and the ability to communicate and to be understood – *in short the sense of exile*." (Khordoc, 2004)

Identity and Migrant theatre: defining the sense of exile

The issue of identity is complex. To analyse this complexity, it is helpful to look at the origins of the concept, at its most basic definitions. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (n. d), there are four meanings for the word identity. For the purpose of this essay, two of these definitions will be examined. Firstly, identity is "the distinguishing character or personality of an individual" and therefore can be related to the concept of individuality. Paradoxically the Latin *identitas* means sameness, "a sameness of essential or generic character in different instances".

Before considering these internal contradictions, it is necessary to interpret the first definition, especially to the words "distinguishing character" as it brings us to some theatrical terminology. In a play, the character, derived from the Greek *kharakter* - an engraved or written mark — is conceived as the defining qualities he or she is given by the playwright. For that reason, all the elements we consider regarding the characters of a play are biased and depend on the amount of information the author is willing to give. Properly speaking, a character is not a person but a set of written elements and cannot have an identity although she/he can present elements of identity. Furthermore the character does not have a body. Technically it is a no-body. But in drama, contrary to the novel where the character remains a being of paper, this "no-body" will gain substance. It will appear on stage, move and talk, love and die, all in front of an audience. To exist materially, the character has to be embodied by an actor who himself or herself accepts to put his or her own identity aside while on stage. Actors "necessarily fill the gaps left by characters" (Ryngaert and Sermon, 2006, p.20). The stage director will also influence the formation of the character by making cultural and aesthetic choices. But most importantly, it is the audience that will

participate in this process by giving a personal and emotional response to the characters, giving consistency to the character's identity. So far, we have listed four different influences that, each in their own way, bring forth the character's identity. It now has a body to progress into a space with specific aesthetic references and a voice to articulate the text. A safe conclusion will be to posit that the character is born out of the representation and the confrontation with an audience: it is no longer a virtual, disjointed being but begins to appear more as a person. However, here lies the trap of identification that has been so virulently denounced by playwrights at the beginning of the 20th century. Following Artaud's intuition and Brecht's prescriptions, many playwrights became suspicious of the traditional character and its closed subjectivity. In post dramatic theatre, drama does not stand as a mirror of reality anymore and this directly affects the character. In fact the subject as a character is generally conceived as a virtual individual but is also thought of as based on a real person. This definition is no longer acceptable. On the contemporary stage, neither inter-subjective relationships nor intra-subjective relationships are simple. Not only does the subject have difficulty communicating, he also barely recognises himself as a self. Authors such as Valère Novarina, Noëlle Renaude or Philippe Minyana, moved away from the concept towards ideas of *figure*, *voix* or *vestige*, generating a fragmented subject.

Let us once again take advantage of etymology. The word "person" is derived from the Latin *personae* — a character in a drama, a mask — thus restoring the initial conundrum about the possibility of an identity on the theatre stage. Theatre, perhaps more than any other art form, provides a fascinating field of analysis because it is built upon the constant tension between nothingness and presence. The migrant as a theatrical character is particularly interesting because her/his identity is based on fragments of identity: she/he evolves on the threshold of two societies, the one she/he left and the one she/he is trying to inhabit. This fundamental *in-betweenness* generates a dynamic process: her/his identity is mobile.

But let us not forget the initial inconsistency that derives from our understanding of the word itself. The second definition of identity evokes the idea of sameness. How is it possible to link the idea of individuality, of "distinguishing characters" with the idea of sameness? The theorist Anne Ubersfeld (1996) does not pretend to resolve this ontological issue but proposes to look at it from an alternative angle. From the beginning of her book, *Lire le théâtre III: Le dialogue de théâtre*, she argues that any theatrical statement is produced by two speakers, the author and the character, and is received by two addressees, because although the character of theatre addresses another character, it also addresses, and even especially addresses, the spectator. Ubersfeld (1996, p.21) defines this phenomenon as *la double énonciation*, a double statement contained in all plays. In my personal opinion, the *double énonciation* has two implications. First it instigates a new sense of balance between all the participants, resulting in a sense of sameness, and of oneness that occurs during the time of the performance. Theatre is a place in the social world

where an emotional community is born (Fischer-Litche, 2010, p.4). This process is not based on one's capacity to identify with the Other's identity but an ability to leave a space to the other in one's own identity. The poet René Char (1962) wrote: "*Épouse et n'épouse pas ta maison*". This enigmatic fragment of *Les Feuillettes d'Hypnos* could play as a metaphor of the issue of identity in theatre. The "mental house" is based on a double movement that echoes the *double énonciation*. It offers the possibility of cohesion with oneself, with one's mental house, with one's "recognised" character and at the same time it illustrates a refusal of the dangerous exclusivity of a closed world, folded up on itself, encouraging one to get rid of the suffocating link of egocentricity. It is in the folds of this movement that a shared identity emerges. This shared identity can only exist in the specific space of theatre at the specific time of performance because, according to Ubersfeld, all participants are willingly taking part in the creation of the performance's significance. This shared identity also partly evacuates the threat of blind identification as all participants are aware of their own identity and are willing to welcome the Other, be it the author or the character, to integrate it to their own vision of the world.

This consciousness leads us to the second implication of the *double énonciation*. Even if the dialogue is based on the model of conversation, it is a totally different process because the pronoun "I" becomes the catalyst of the performance; it no longer stands for the character alone but embodies all the participants of the *double énonciation*. The 'I' who proceeds from the theatrical text has to produce an effect on both character and spectator. The *double énonciation* opens up the theatrical space by including the spectator in the creation of the sense, as the 'I' of the character is enclosed in the 'I' of both actors and stage director who are themselves wrapped in the 'I' of the spectator.

Finally, it is necessary to explain that our comprehension of identity is inscribed in a theoretical framework known as migrant writing. Nepveu lets us consider the term 'migrant' as a new type of writing that insists more upon "the movement, the drift, and the multiple crossings which are resulting from the experience of exile." The adjective 'migrant' "has the advantage of already pointing towards an aesthetic practice, a fundamental dimension for current literature." (Nepveu, 1999, p. 234) Contrary to the experience of exile that can only be lived in the flesh, this sense of exile can apply to both immigrants and non-immigrants. In both cases, the feeling of displacement arises from the relationship an individual has with space. The body is the physical frame of identity and it is through the body and its physical connections to the outside world that an individual will begin to define his or her identity. In the case of immigrants, these daily habits are subject to considerable alterations. Everything will begin to change: the smells, the sounds and one's relationship with one's body. This physical connection to identity also allows each individual to position him or herself in a definite geographical location and within a particular social setting (Shankar Saha, 2009). This corporal belonging to a geographical space generates cultural practices and emotional connections. "Basically", as Amit Shankar Saha (2009) explains, "they (human beings) live in 'spaces' that have either physical presence

or are born out of such concrete parameters into conceptual presences: geographical and social spaces fall into the former category whereas cultural and emotional spaces belong to the latter.” To understand these external spaces, individuals need to communicate with them. In order to do so, they will use their internal and mental space (and this is why the sense of exile defined by Khordoc (2004) has to be considered as a subject of psychological origin). The sense of exile translates the inability of the mind to reconcile its differences with the world and to identify with it. In migrant writing the aesthetic of identity is therefore systematically combined with an aesthetic of space. As defined earlier, this sense of exile applies to both immigrants and non-immigrants but obviously it does not have the same implications. Through the analysis of two plays, *Les filles du 5-10-15c* by Abia Farhoud and *Rien d’humain* by Marie NDiaye, I will now demonstrate that theatre never stops asking the question of “what is identity?”

Abia Farhoud and the complementary identity

In *Les filles du 5-10-15c*, Abia Farhoud chooses to write about the sense of exile of an immigrant, the young Kaokab. Both Kaokab and her older sister Amira are born in Lebanon but their parents decide to move to Montreal when they are still very young. They are introduced to Canadian society by very conventional means: they go to a Francophone school to get an education that would not have been given to them if they had stayed in Lebanon. This access to education guaranteed, at least for a time, brings a sense of balance in the two girls’ lives. It generates a real, if tenuous, stability between a link with their origins, the private sphere, and affiliation to a social context, the public sphere (to Canadian society). However, this fragile equilibrium is irreversibly broken when the two girls are forced to work in the family’s shop to pay for the studies of their only brother, Mounir. Furthermore, their parents do not speak French. While Amira does speak Arabic, Kaokab, the main character, has a limited understanding of her parents’ native language. The parents cannot play their natural role as links with the culture of origin and guides into a new cultural setting, so it falls to Amira to act as a mediator between them and her younger sister. However, her position in the family is not different from Kaokab’s. Whereas Amira seems resigned and refuses to fight, the younger Kaokab is deeply wounded both by this injustice and by the incapacity of her family to be rooted. Throughout the play, she vehemently tries to assert her right to education thereby questioning her place within the familial structure, which represents the old cultural heritage, but also tries to assert her own identity as a means to find her place in Canadian society, the new cultural environment. Farhoud is going to translate this struggle by interweaving the issue of the identity of her character and the way this character relates to theatrical space.

The playwright questions the construction of identity on two levels: Kaokab has to be considered first as an immigrant, then as a teenager. In fact, Kaokab quickly puts the issue

of immigration forward.

Kaokab: Si au moins on nous avait mis à l'école anglaise en arrivant ici, on serait comme eux autres. Mais non! Là, on est toute seules. Pas d'amis canadiens français, pas d'amis libanais. Juste notre famille perdue au milieu d'étrangers." (p.16)

By using the double negation "no French Canadian friends, no Lebanese friends" she emphasises her sense of loneliness as an immigrant and also underlines the impossibility of a return. She cannot identify with either group because in both cases she is confronted with an otherness that she cannot overcome. Moreover, the only social structure she can rely on is the nuclear space of family. However, this space does not stand as a safe haven. On the contrary, it is defined by its insularity, "*Juste notre famille*", and a concept of loss, "*perdue au milieu d'étrangers*". Considering Kaokab has a very limited understanding of Arabic, even her interaction with her family, both as a cultural and social anchor, is very restricted. In fact, the cultural barrier is the first obstacle she encounters. Her father forbids any kind of relationship with French Canadians because he is obsessed by the notion of *sharaf*, honour, and hopes to marry off his daughters to Lebanese immigrants. However, most of them do not speak French.

Because she can access neither her school, a physical space which symbolises the key to the new culture, nor communicate with her family, a mental space that traditionally passes on a cultural heritage, Kaokab is consumed by a deep feeling of displacement and cannot reconcile the tensions and negations that constitute her identity. As mentioned early on, she is also sixteen years old and is going through another identity crisis: adolescence. Adolescence is a period of transition for all individuals, a transition between an age in which parents remain the principal vectors of cultural identity but which is also constructed around the discovery of Otherness. In the end, the adolescent will reach a compromise, building her- or himself on representations of the world. Kaokab is forced to define herself on an uneven basis, both as an immigrant and as a young adult.

To exteriorise her uneasiness, Kaokab is tempted by two solutions: communication and violence. Throughout the play, Kaokab uses an old tape recorder, not only a tool to speak with her parents (Farhoud, LF51015, Scene1, pp. 5-7) but also as a means to retain traces of her past (Farhoud, LF51015, scene 6, p.28). This theatrical prop could therefore be considered as having a positive dimension, symbolising Kaokab's wish for a better future. However, her use of the machine becomes more and more erratic: she cries each time she turns it on, and she systematically removes her speeches as if, by repeatedly erasing her own voice, Kaokab is erasing part of herself. The functionality of the tape recorder is symbolically interesting: each time Kaokab presses the rewind button, she goes back on her own speech, at the same time erasing it and rebuilding a new speech on top of the old one. This represents the way she organises her quest for identity. She is constantly trying to rebuild herself on an unfinished and inoperative basis.

Both speakers and addressees are affected by these subtractions as it prevents them from

defining a fixed image of the character, of its identity. They are constantly forced to rebuild the theatrical sense of the pronoun 'I'. It also shows that Kaokab is conscious of the ineptness of words and systematically turns to violence to fight her sense of emptiness.

The physical seclusion of Kaokab echoes her mental confinement. On stage, it is symbolised by the progressive reduction of the main theatrical space (the shop) and its contrast with a fantasised though very limited outside (the pavement) (Farhoud, *LF51015*, 'The set', p.4). Throughout the play, boxes full of goods for the shop keep piling up, constantly reducing the theatrical space. This treatment of space creates an intense sense of claustrophobia both in psychological terms; Kaokab is trapped in her own mind, and in physical terms; she is trapped in the theatrical space. At the same time, the spectator bears witness to the progressive disappearance of the character. The gradual passage from communication to violence is described by Farhoud herself in a lengthy stage direction at the beginning of the play (Farhoud, *LF51015*, scene 1, p.6): Kaokab breaks pencils and tears up a notebook. This constant use of violence illustrates the young girl's difficulty in building her identity but also demonstrates her will to assert herself. Throughout Farhoud's play, violence helps the character regain control over the theatrical space, as if by destroying her surroundings, the character could extend her subjectivity. But Kaokab's power is limited and very soon, the space is filled to the point of bursting. Quiet Amira, who until then emphasised the need to tidy and organise the shop, is also getting drowned amongst the cardboard boxes: "*Amira marche le long des comptoirs. Sa démarche est lente, ses épaules rentrées. Les boîtes se sont amoncelées dans les allées (...)*" (Farhoud, *LFD51015*, scene 9, p.6)" as if she were abandoning her initial role. Amira refuses to be a link anymore and this rejection permanently breaks the connection of both girls with the outside, whether it be the fictional pavement or the off stage theatrical space.

As Carmen Camilleri (Camilleri, 1995 cited in Bourquin, 2003, p.32), explains, "identity is constructed with relationships with others (...) an interactive process of assimilation and differentiation, in which the definition of the self constantly intrudes onto the definition of the other." However, Kaokab is completely isolated, she does not have access to any other to compare herself with. As mentioned earlier, even though Amira does communicate with her parents, she is not listened to. She is not "other" but an older, subdued version of Kaokab. In this play, Farhoud reinterprets the archetypal symbol of the twins: the two girls become one. She creates a dialogical symmetry between the two characters. Kaokab is the one who can articulate her feelings but she is unable to do so in front of her parents while Amira, the nearly mute one on stage, has the ability to communicate with the parents but cannot express her angst. Moreover, the physical resemblance between both girls grows steadily, to the point that it becomes hard to tell them apart, as if they were mirroring each other's emotions and appearance. The playwright emphasises this similarity by dressing them in the same way and "impeccable" Amira will gradually become as "bedraggled" (Farhoud, *LF51015*, 'The set', p.4) as her younger sister. Farhoud creates a single and original character, an identity shared between two bodies, interwoven with the memories

of the older and the words of the younger. This symmetry can be found in the structure of their exchange: they very frequently rephrase each other's words but they also tend to finish each other's sentences (Farhoud, LF51015, scene 2, p.15):

Kaokab : Dans les vergers de mon villageY'a du soleil à volontéDans les vergers de mon villageY'a des oranges à volonté , (...)Moi, je me souviens plus. Je ne sais pas pourquoi, à chaque fois que je mange une orange, ça me fait penser au Liban. (...)
Amira: Les oranges te font penser au soleil et le soleil te fait penser au Liban.

As a result, the theatrical statement becomes more complicated as it does not rely on the tetralogy defined by Ubersfeld (1996) anymore. On stage, the speaker becomes one with the addressee and this contamination of one term by the other could spread to the rest of the participants, erasing the traditional borders between stage and audience. Moreover, this merging of characters generates immobility: the identity, trapped between two characters, cannot unfold in the theatrical space anymore, a phenomenon which itself ensures that the theatrical space cannot expand beyond the limits of the stage. No matter how strongly the girls wish to escape, they are prisoners of the dramatic space and of the hermetical construction of the play, their situation echoing the entrapment of the immigrant between the new and the old cultures.

Marie NDiaye and the symmetrical conflict

Marie NDiaye's play *Rien d'humain* (2004) can be described as the reverse picture of the sense of exile experienced by immigrants. The story describes two non-immigrant women: Bella, a recent divorcee who comes back to her country, and Djamila, a friend to whom Bella lent her apartment while abroad. Bella wants to get her apartment back to house her three children but Djamila refuses to return it, claiming it now belongs to her. Ignace, a neighbour in love with Djamila who is convinced she had had his child, is going to be an intermediary between the two women until he forces them to confront each other and loses everything in the process. In all her works, Marie NDiaye demonstrates "an added exactitude in her choice of words" (Lepape, 1994). This peculiar accuracy can first be observed in the names she chooses for her characters. In fact, the name Djamila means "the beautiful" and is the Arabic translation of the Italian name Bella. For attentive readers and spectators, the identical naming of two characters already points at something out of the ordinary. In his article 'Halo of Identity: The Significance of First Names and Naming', (2003), M.D. Tschaepé argues that "the 'regime' of first naming involves a judgement and type of psycho-sociological bondage, which sustains the personality and idea of an individual as a specific type of individual within the community in which one is named. Just as 'I is an order-word' in a general sense (Merleau-Ponty, 1923, p.84), so too is the first name an order-word, but in a much more specific sense. The first name, when placed within the individual, becomes a dictum that states, 'you are this' and 'you are not that.'" In regard

to this conception and when confronted with the notion of identity, the deliberate choice by NDiaye is quite disturbing indeed. From the beginning of the play, we are aware that the two women are symmetrical in name, an essential symbol of identity. However, the playwright downplays this symmetry. Although the two women are the same age (NDiaye, RDH, scene 3, p.26), Ignace lyrically describes Bella as a beautiful woman (NDiaye, RDH, scene 3, p.22) with “eyes that remind (him) of the colour of the picking of mushrooms in the woods of (his) childhood and a neck as fine and flexible as the trunk of a young willow” (NDiaye, RDH, scene 6, p.38), Djamilia refers to herself as a “rock” (NDiaye, RDH, scene 6, p.42), she is “a person with venomous instincts” (NDiaye, RDH, scene 3, p.24). Where Bella exposed her whole life on stage and spoke of her children, those “poor little rabbits”, Djamilia is secretive and has a mysterious and invisible daughter. Bella is from the Bourgeoisie while Djamilia was born in a slum (NDiaye, RDH, scene 3, p.24). NDiaye opposes the circularity of Bella to the angularity of Djamilia, the triviality of one character’s existence to the nearly magical abilities of the other. But the more the play progresses, the less important these differences appear to be. Djamilia and Bella are not just old friends; they shared their childhood together. Djamilia was ‘saved’ by Bella’s family. But this generosity was an act as Bella’s father and brothers repeatedly abused the young girl. Djamilia knows she has been used, hence her desire for vengeance towards Bella, who remained a silent witness of the rapes. However, it is Bella who is going to describe these past events as if Djamilia’s rigidity and silence were compelling her to speak. Abrupt and vulgar revelations erupt repeatedly in Bella’s polished language and her constant apologies show that she does not control this process. The reason for Bella’s silence and the reason for Djamilia’s ‘adoption’ will only emerge at the end of the play when Bella confesses to her friend:

Bella. — Tu es mon amie, ils t’ont prise pour se préserver de me prendre, baisée pour éviter de me baiser, va, tu es mon amie. Il était préférable, il était moins grave que ce fût toi plutôt que moi, nous te devons beaucoup. Tu es mon amie.” (NDiaye, RDH, scene 6, p.40-42).

Djamilia was chosen to play Bella’s double in the perverted games of the latter’s incestuous family. To play her part to the point of perfection, she was shaped on Bella. To render the horror of the situation, NDiaye creates a strong symmetry between her characters, but while Amira and Kaokab were completing each other’s identity in Farhoud’s play, Djamilia and Bella are the two conflicting sides of the same coin. Their memories are merged together into a common past identity but those responsible for their pains will never pay. Therefore, it is not surprising that at the end of the play Bella, the weaker part of this identity, imitates Djamilia’s behaviour. The third character, the good, devoted Ignace, has been greatly confused by all the similarities between the two women and does not know who he is in love with anymore. He is never allowed into Djamilia’s apartment and Bella throws him out of his own apartment. Even though the spectator is confronted with an outside space, the threshold of Djamilia’s apartment, for most of the play, in the end both women

disappear in a mysterious interiority that the spectator, just like poor Ignace, cannot access. By merging the two women into one identity, NDiaye ensures that the expansion of the dramatic space is now impossible on stage. Just as in Farhoud's the *double énonciation* cannot operate anymore because space is now situated in a fundamental otherness, an unreachable *somewhere else* outside the stage. The characters disappear beyond the spectator's reach, denying him any interaction and refusing to identify with the outside world, henceforth embodying a sense of exile.

At first, the plays of Farhoud and NDiaye seem to follow the rules of a traditional dialogical system. However, by deconstructing and preventing the *double énonciation*, both playwrights build original theatrical systems. Without putting the concept of character through radical changes as other contemporary playwrights might have done, they still manage to underline the extreme volatility of the notion, highlighting the necessary connection between the identity of a character and the space it depends on. Through the analysis of these two plays, we find that the determination of identity is directly linked to the relationship the character has with space. Migrant theatre draws attention to the multiple influences that constitute an identity. By stating that the construction of identity is, at all times, geographically influenced, migrant theatre suggests that identity is never an arrested fact. On the contrary, it is a concept marked by a strong volatility. It also has to stem from an exchange between the migrant and the other and this exchange should not depend solely on migrants. Migrant theatre opens up the possibility of 'a multiplicity of identities' but also warns us that this possibility can only appear as the result of a shared effort. The instability of the migrant partly depends on the amount of space we, as Westerners, are willing to give her/him in our contemporary societies.

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Editorial — “Where Do You Come From and When Are You Going Back to Your Country?”

A Diasporan Reflection on Identity Crises of African Immigrants in Germany

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Abstract

What is identity really? What gives a person identity? Is it birthplace, colour, gender or legal papers that prove who a person is? Can identity be acquired by integration? These are some of the questions that this paper seeks to answer in the context of African immigrants in Germany. It is also important to note that most of the immigrants have a lot of unanswered questions in relation to identity. This paper is motivated by the conditions of Afro-Germans who have learnt to live with the following questions: 1) “Where do you come from or Woher kommen Sie?” 2) “When are you going back to Africa or Wann werden Sie zuruck zu Ihrem Land?” These two questions will guide this paper in its reflection on the identity crises of African immigrants in Germany. Empirical data was gathered through random and unstructured interviews with thirteen Afro-Germans in Bayern. The paper also makes use of secondary literature obtained from newspapers, published journals and academic texts that deal with immigrants.

Introduction

The term ‘identity’ has been defined and understood in multiple ways. Dictionary definitions of identity are not always clear and have not, unfortunately, caught up with modern contexts. Yet the concept of ‘identity’ has been at the centre of debate in political science, social science, international relations, comparative politics, religious studies, cultural studies, theology, history and the humanities. In comparative politics, ‘identity’ plays a central role in work on nationalism and ethnic conflict. In international relations, the idea of ‘state identity’ is at the heart of constructivist critiques of realism and analyses of state sovereignty. And in political theory, questions of ‘identity’ mark numerous arguments on gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity and culture in relation to liberalism and its alternatives. James D. Fearon is right to note that

Identity is a complicated and (sic) unclear concept that nonetheless plays a central role in ongoing debates in political science especially when it comes to issues like: nationality, race, ethnic, gender, sexuality, religious, culture, and state identities.

James D. Fearon further regards ‘identity’ as referring to either (a) a social category defined by membership rules and expected behaviours or (b) socially distinguishing features in which a person takes a special pride. Identity has generally been associated with the following social categories of life: dignity, pride and honor. The concept of ‘identity’ has a double sense that touches on communal and individual dignity. When society and individual fail to bring a sense of belonging, pride and self-esteem, it produces identity crises. According to Erikson, an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. Francis Mading Deng argues:

Identity is of little consequence in most modern, democratic, and pluralistic countries or societies where discrimination on the basis of race, skin colour, national origin, religion, or gender is forbidden by law. Stated in positive terms, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms also imply that an individual’s identity is accommodated through tolerance for diversity. But in some countries or societies these elements of identity are important factors in the sense of belonging to the nation and participation in the political, economic and social process.

However, Francis Mading Deng’s understanding of identity becomes problematic when related to the **Norwegian mass-murderer, Anders Behring Breivik, who** killed 76 people accusing Norway’s governing Labour Party of failing the country on immigration. Immigrant identity issues have always been an issue in Europe. There are certain features that help give a person identity, which include: country of origin, culture, language, colour, food eaten and access to resources.

Culture and Identity Formation

Culture shapes people and in most cases culture is a system of knowledge shared by the community. Culture creates the identity of a people. Ralph Linton states that:

The culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation.

In Clyde Kluckhohn’s elegant phrase, culture is a ‘design for living’ held by members of a particular society. Peoples’ behaviour and actions are based on guidelines which are learned and shared by all members. These guidelines help the society to operate effectively and form the identity of the society. Stuart Hall argued that identity comes from belonging to a certain culture. Therefore one needs to belong to a certain culture in order to be part of the group. The definition of culture varies from society to society. Most societies in Europe and the Americas are regarded as ‘multi-cultural’ societies where cultures are purported to exist side by side. However, is it always the case that by belonging to a

certain culture one becomes part of the community, or that cultures can exist side by side? This paper is interested in looking at the identity crises of Afro-Germans. The experience of Arabs in Germany will also be discussed where their experience is similar to that of Afro-Germans so as to further clarify the context of Afro-Germans.

Demographically, Germany has a population of 82 million people and of this figure; 15-20 percent are of immigrant background. This then puts the immigrant demographic figure at around 12-16 million people. Research carried out in 2008 found that 18.4 percent of Germans of any age group and 30 percent of German children had at least one parent born abroad. The median age for Germans with at least one parent born abroad was 33.8 years, while that for Germans who had two parents born in Germany was 44.6 years. In the year 2000 there were around 300,000 Afro-Germans and 150,000 African nationals in Germany. The growing number of immigrants in Germany has led to debates on ‘identity’ and ‘integration’. This was also noted by Rita Süßmuth, the former president of the German Parliament that ‘Germany is virtually an immigration country’. Süßmuth’s claim was disputed by the general secretary of the Germany Christian Social Union who declared that ‘Germany was not an immigration country’; a statement regarded as signaling and confirming an anti-immigrant position.

The claims and counter-claims on whether Germany is an immigrant country or not has led to questions like: Who is considered an immigrant in Germany? When does one become a German citizen? Important to note is that in German statistics a person who has at least one parent born abroad will be counted as a person with an immigrant background. This statistical category has led German-citizenship holders with foreign ancestry to experience identity crises. Even though Afro-Germans know Germany as home, they are not defined as German. Sadly, where their great-grandfathers originated from has long been forgotten. They cannot trace their family history as American President Barack Obama was able to do. When they came to Germany, they were integrated into the system. Nowadays, immigrants learn the Deutsch language and culture before settling down. There are still debates on African immigrants’ lack of identity and culture. African immigrants find it difficult to fit into the culture of host European countries, particularly Germany. As much as they try to be part of their new society, they often confront cultural obstacles that become setbacks to their integration. One Susan Chando claimed that:

I do not understand how one can integrate when one is not truly welcome to integrate.
We are always made to feel that we have overstayed our welcome even if we have
chosen Germany as our permanent home.

As a result of the challenges, most immigrants will continue to occupy a Third-Way culture, between German and African cultures. The challenges lead African immigrants in Germany to experience an identity crisis despite possessing the relevant legal papers.

Language and identity

Language gives belonging to a people. Language is a cultural package that narrates the history of a people, the power struggles, their colonisation, invasions, wars, racism, slavery and conquest. Most nations today value their language and formulate language curricula to preserve their culture as well as to help immigrants study and fit into their system of life, as shown below.



However, the challenge still remains for children born to African immigrants in Germany. They learn the German language and culture at school but at home adjust to their African culture. Proposals have been made by Christian Lindner, chairman of governing coalition partners the Free Democrats (FDP) that ‘students must speak a common language whenever on school grounds so as to help stop certain groups becoming isolated’. We would argue otherwise because, in our view, speaking a common language will not help unless mainstream society’s perception of foreigners changes. Christian Lindner thinks that the problem of integration can be solved by speaking *Deutsch*, which cannot be true as long as the attitude of broader society remains uncorrected. The research study entitled: “*Die Mitte in der Krise-Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2010* or *The Mainstream in the Crisis Right-Wing Extremist Attitudes in Germany*,” showed that older and less-educated Germans were most likely to be intolerant. This study, like the FES, observed that the right-wing extremist views were in ‘worrying amounts in the German mainstream society’. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, once declared the death of multiculturalism in Germany. The German leader is quoted saying:

It had been an illusion to think that Germans and foreign workers could live happily side by side. In the beginning of the 60s our country called the foreign workers to

come to Germany and now they live in our country. We kidded ourselves for a while that they wouldn't stay, but that's not the reality. But this concept has failed, and failed utterly.

Unfortunately the Chancellor did not elaborate on the nature and causes of the failure of integration. It is important to note that multiculturalism can't be dead but the possible explanation is that it never lived or existed in the first place or that the mechanisms that were put in place to make multiculturalism function are malfunctioning. Successful integration and pride in one's identity and respect in mainstream society is important. There are, however, some African immigrants that have resisted being integrated into German society because they want to maintain their own closed family culture. This was confirmed by Yahya Mayunni who said that:

Germany is a wonderful place full of amazing people. African immigrants must stop working the victim card by first introspecting themselves and see where they fall short in integrating themselves to the German society. It's not difficult at all since I worked here for the past twenty years. I found some Germans to be very friendly possibly because I first said to myself that, 'Germany is a fantastic place to be'.

The German government, to some extent, is trying its best to integrate immigrants but there needs to be more consciousness raising and more done to change the attitude of broader society towards immigrants in general and to Afro-Germans in particular.

At times, the effort by the German government bears less fruit because of the German media. The media contributes to stereotyping immigrants and anyone with immigrant ancestors. There was once a debate in Germany about the singing of the National Anthem during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The German World Cup soccer legend, Franz Beckenbauer, (once a player as well as coach) was quoted in the German tabloid *Bild-Zeitung* saying:

All of them should sing the anthem. It can't be that the fans in the stands or those watching at home to sing along but those on the field don't.

Franz Beckenbauer did not specify who was singing and who was not singing but his statement unleashed a flurry of debate as the German media and web forums — most prominently, the *Bild*, (Germany's largest daily) — singled out the players who didn't sing as mostly those with foreign names. The 2010 Germany coach, Jog Löw, added to the controversy by saying 'Our boys identify totally with the national team and Germany, but one also has to consider their *heritage*'. Franz Beckenbauer and Jog Löw lead us to ask the following question: What do foreign names and heritage have to do with singing or not singing the national anthem? The media in this case gave the general impression that those with foreign names and heritage were naturally unpatriotic. Unfortunately, there is a lack of consideration for the great number of immigrants who make determined efforts to fit into German society but still find it very difficult to be accepted.

When Are You Going Back to Your Country?

When one is born in a foreign land as third generation or more, one's identity is already socially constructed as linked to immigrant ancestors. In most cases, immigrants' identities are socially constructed based on religion, dress, language, food and education. Documentation on its own seems to have failed in changing the attitudes towards the identity of Afro-Germans. Most Afro-Germans suffer identity crises because society constantly reminds them that they are Africans and not Germans. The following questions are common with African immigrants: Where did your forefathers come from? When are you going back? Do you know your relatives there? All such questions add up to the fact that Afro-Germans are always defined and identified with their ancestral roots. It does not matter that the ancestral roots have long been buried and forgotten. Mark from Mozambique says:

I have been in Germany for 23 years and I have renounced my Mozambican identity. But I am still considered a foreigner. At work everyone sees me as a foreigner even if I can speak Deutsch well. I am married to a German wife.

The above statements by Mark show how society contributes to identity. Popular culture creates a social ladder where certain colours are always placed outside mainstream society. Immigrants who are already accepted, naturalized and integrated are officially called Germans, but there is always the question about where they originally come from? If their parents were born in Germany, the pyramid goes back to the immigrant ancestors? The result is that one is denied German identity without a full historical background. If the culture and cultural values are unclear to Afro-Germans, then the result is an 'identity crisis'. Miranda, who has a German mother and Nigerian father, expressed how she is confused with her identity. She narrates that she does not feel accommodated in both Nigeria and Germany. It is such challenges that mean Afro-Germans are faced with an identity crisis both in Germany and Africa.

Identity, Religious Faith and Resource Allocation and Job Opportunities

The questions that Afro-Germans are normally asked remind them about identity. Joseph Maluleke (not his real name) born in Germany and married to a black wife born in Germany indicated that:

The questions are sometimes loaded with xenophobia as some of his neighbours are fully aware that his parents were born and bred in Germany. My parents have only known Germany as their home and there is no other home but our neighbours keep on asking us such questions. If they don't ask us, they ask our children so as to laugh at them when they say they are Germans. This is the same at work where it's not

easy to interact with other Germans without being made to feel that we don't belong to Germany and we are a burden to the national economy. The social attitude is of 'us' and 'foreigners' who take our job opportunities and strain the social services of Germany.

The FES research found that, more than 30 percent of the people that were interviewed agreed with the statement that, 'foreigners come to abuse the welfare state,' and this was backed by the centre-left Social Democrats. Interestingly, around 35.6 percent of the people said that in a limited job market 'one should send foreigners back home' and they also claimed that 'too many immigrants put Germany in danger of being overrun'. According to the Allensbach poll commissioned by the *Financial Times Deutschland*, 55 percent judged that migrant groups have "cost significantly more financially and socially than it has yielded economically. Migrants were poorly educated and had more children". More than one third of the population believes Germany is indeed becoming 'dumber on average' because of immigration, as controversially claimed by the Germany Central banker, Thilo Sarrazin. Thilo Sarrazin further revealed his anti-immigrant stance, though aiming primarily at Turks and Arabs, in his controversial book entitled: *Deutschland schafft sich ab-Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen*, or "Abolishing Germany: How We're Putting Our Country in Jeopardy." Thilo Sarrazin argued that poorly educated and unproductive Muslim immigrants made Germany 'more stupid'. Even though many politicians condemned Sarrazin's position, polls showed that public support of his views was growing in Germany. Critics feel that the target on Turks and Arabs is motivated by Islamophobia and that this fear negatively brands all immigrants as a threat to German life. A study by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation think-tank showed that more than 30 percent of people believed the country was being 'overrun by foreigners' and roughly the same number thought that some 16 million of Germany's immigrants or people with foreign origins had come to the country for its social benefits. It is such claims, unsubstantiated by research findings, that make Afro-Germans feel excluded from mainstream society. Thilo Sarrazin fails to interrogate German policies in light of immigrants or people with immigrant roots, particularly Afro-Germans. That attitude has led to unimaginable effects on the identity of the 'self' in most Afro-Germans and there have been complaints about job opportunities where adults with foreign ancestry or foreign names find it difficult to be absorbed into the white-collar job market. In general most Afro-Germans find themselves doing the odd-jobs and unskilled casual work (even though these people have good qualifications) that are shunned by German locals. Of late, the federal government can be commended for drafting a law that seeks to improve the recruitment and employment of immigrants. By the government's own estimate, some 300,000 underemployed immigrants could turn to professions for which they were trained. According to Christal Morehouse, senior project manager at the Bertelsmann Foundation:

Many foreigners don't presently have the right to let their credentials be assessed. The new law will do away with that dead-end street, which is really a trauma because people are stuck in limbo even though they have qualifications for good jobs'.

This has led critics to argue that the general attitude towards immigrants could be a carbon copy of German state nationalism, which might be interesting when related to the variations in understandings of German-ness and the broader Afro-German. The debate on the status of immigrants can be extended to include Arab Moslems though we do not have space in this article for that.

Conclusion

In order to solve the problems of identity crises or challenges, host societies must create a milieu of integration. Mainstream society needs to be trained and taught about integrating other people who have chosen to permanently become part of their society. It is our understanding that the German public space, particularly the role of politicians, clergymen and women, must take a leading role when it comes to what is publicly said in relation to immigrants. Politicians should realize that as much as they speak to their local German audience; their remarks, as in the case of the Chancellor Merkel that ‘multiculturalism has failed in Germany’, are echoed around the world. People take into consideration their ‘identity’ by looking at how they are regarded in public by mainstream society. German mainstream society must be made realize and understand the benefits of diversity and tolerance, to see them as an opportunity to develop and not as a burden. Mainstream society needs to recognize the contributions of Afro-Germans and other immigrants. It is trust amongst citizens that can lead to the development of nations.

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Editorial — The Fractured Self:

Postmodernism and Depersonalization Disorder

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Abstract

This paper will examine the introspective infernos of fractured identity in several late postmodernist texts dating from mid- to late nineties America. Tim O'Brien's 1994 novel *In the Lake of the Woods* and its companion essay "The Vietnam in Me," Chuck Palahniuk's 1996 novel *Fight Club* and David Fincher's 1999 film of the same name and Darren Aronofsky's 2010 *Black Swan*, all demonstrate the intersection between the postmodern and the depersonalized subject. Through a diagnostic reading of these texts, I intend to demonstrate the close relationship between elements of postmodern cultural and critical theory with the psychiatric disorder depersonalization disorder. Specifically, this will entail a reconsideration of elements of both Fredric Jameson's and Jean Baudrillard's respective cultural theories. Following these explorations, attention will be given towards the poetics of depersonalization. This will entail an examination of the Gothic-postmodernist motifs — as outlined by Maria Beville's recent monograph *Gothic-postmodernism* (2009) — of the mirror and the doppelgänger, common to each text's eerie expressions of alterity. These texts are structurally mimetic of, and metaphorically attached to, both postmodernism and depersonalization disorder. Interpreting these texts as points of intersection between the psychiatric disorder depersonalization disorder and the postmodern condition can aid an understanding of this hellish sense of a split self and the texts themselves. In these texts, the postmodern condition induces a depersonalized identity leaving the protagonists in a state of existential insecurity and disconnection from their sense of self.

The mind is its own place and in itself Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

— *Paradise Lost* (Milton 1667, i. 254-5)

Introduction: Of Wars and Wastelands.

T.S. Eliot's oft-quoted doctrine of poetic impersonality states that artists must detach themselves from experience and undergo a "process of depersonalization" in order to infuse "significant emotion" into the life of an artwork (1920). Eliot prescribes periods of voluntary artistic detachment to grasp a fuller realisation of personal experience. Thus, Eliot's modernist inferno, the "unreal city" of *The Waste Land*, is haunted by a plethora of dissociated voices (1922). These fragmented voices combine to explore a disillusioned poet's disconnection with a landscape shattered by the world's first technological war. On the

other side of the post-war psychological fallout, Weimar Germany began its own questioning of urbanity and identity with the sinister aesthetic regime of expressionism. F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) exemplifies this eerie disconnection from war-torn Germany through the vampiric invasion of the town of Wisborg. The "black death" accompanies Count Orlok (Max Schreck) and infects the urban space of Murnau's post-war nightmare, *Nosferatu*. The city is unanimously depicted as a mass graveyard, the nexus of modernist disconnection.

The modernist dissociation from the "metropolis of death" (Beville 2009, p.31) began to give way to an increased emphasis on the psychological aspects of individual identity in art following World War II. Postmodernists began to reject identity as a psychologically whole entity, heightening Eliot's "process of depersonalization" to morbid extremes. Early strands of postmodernism, such as the absurdist experiments of Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, and Eugene Ionesco, explored stagnant realms of isolation, indifference and inaction. Ionesco's *La Cantatrice Chauve* (1950) depicts a dissociated cycle of characters in a motionless and meaningless world. In this single act pseudo-play, the depersonalized couples — the Smiths and the Martins — perform interchangeable roles, resulting in a requiem for individual identity. The postmodern psyche began to suffer a disconnection not only from the exterior world, but also from itself.

The Vietnam War "helped create and define [...] 'the postmodern condition'" (Carpenter 2003, p.35) and its resulting literature gave rise to an increased interest in investigating identity. Carpenter notes, "[o]ne of the many ironies of the Vietnam War is that the one war America lost gave rise to more and better literature — collectively — than any of America's other twentieth century wars" (2003, p.30). War veterans such as Tim O'Brien — discussed in greater detail below — and Michael Herr, helped forge a distinctly American postmodern signature in their prose. Herr's *Dispatches* (1968) presents us with a subject "just as fragmented as his narrative," an innovative blend of journalism and fiction detailing his overwhelming war experience (p.39), while O'Brien continually explores a fragmentation of subjectivity that resulted from his participation in the "world's first terrible postmodernist war" (Jameson quoted in Carpenter, p.35). The mind itself becomes the late twentieth century's wasteland.

This paper will examine the introspective infernos of fractured identity in several late postmodernist texts dating from mid- to late nineties America. Tim O'Brien's 1994 novel *In the Lake of the Woods* and its companion essay "The Vietnam in Me," Chuck Palahniuk's 1996 novel *Fight Club* and David Fincher's 1999 film of the same name all demonstrate the intersection between the postmodern and the depersonalized. Conceived within a "liminal space in terms of history and modern identity" (Beville, p.100) — approaching the death of a millennium, anxiously anticipating the birth of a new one — these texts demonstrate a heightened trepidation regarding identity, depicting, with clinical precision, subjects suffering from the hell of depersonalization disorder. Darren Aronofsky's 2010

Black Swan retains specific elements of the depersonalization process and demonstrates that these anxieties regarding identity persist in our new millennium. I have chosen these texts as, despite their diversity of subjects, they all exhibit symptoms of this increasingly common psychiatric disorder through their mimetic structure, metaphoric constructs and imagery.

O'Brien's *In the Lake of the Woods* presents us with a metafictional mystery in which an anonymous researcher investigates the disappearance of John Wade (a recovering Vietnam veteran) and his wife, Kathy. O'Brien's "The Vietnam in Me" explores O'Brien's own experience in Vietnam and outlines the depression and Post-Traumatic Stress that haunt him decades after his time in Vietnam. Both Palahniuk's and Fincher's *Fight Club* relate the story of an anonymous insomniac (referred to as 'Jack' by critics and fans alike) who suffers from a shattered sense of identity when confronted with his anarchistic alter-ego Tyler Durden. *Black Swan* documents the psychological rupture of Nina (Natalie Portman) who, when faced with the task of performing the split role of the white swan/ black swan in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (1876), suffers a fractured identity. These texts present the potential hell lurking within the psyche and reveal what happens when the human subject becomes depersonalized, or estranged from its sense of self. For the depersonalized subject suffering the inner anguish of an unstable identity, the words of Milton's *Paradise Lost* "ring true with profound insight" (Simeon and Abugel 2006, p.5).

Defining Depersonalization Disorder.

"Am I asleep? Had I slept? Is Tyler my bad dream or am I Tyler's? I was living in a state of perpetual *Déjà vu* [...] everywhere I went, I felt I had already been there. It was like following an invisible man." Jack, *Fight Club* (Fincher, 1999).

Daphne Simeon's paper "Depersonalisation Disorder: A Contemporary Overview" (2004) offers a comprehensive compilation of psychiatric research and analysis regarding depersonalization disorder. According to Simeon:

Dissociation is defined as a disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity, and perception, leading to a fragmentation of the coherence, unity and continuity of the sense of self. Depersonalisation is a particular type of dissociation involving a disrupted integration of self-perceptions with the sense of self, so that individuals experiencing depersonalisation are in a subjective state of feeling estranged, detached or disconnected with their own being. (p.344)

Descriptions of the disorder are characterised by patients recollecting "out-of-body experiences [or] feeling like [they] are in a dream or fog" (p.344). A sense of meaningless, nauseating and futile repetition dominates the subjects' lives. Edward Norton's Jack of *Fight Club* describes this struggle while pursuing his depersonalized self, his *doppelgänger*, Tyler (Brad Pitt) and, in doing so, illustrates how sufferers of depersonalization disorder endure a disorientating sense of "perpetual *Déjà vu*."

Simeon and Abugel note that, “[i]n Western culture, we seem to be witnessing a rise in the number of reported cases of depersonalization” (2006, p.63). Thus, “the question [arises] whether or not modern society is, in itself, a cause of depersonalization” (p.63). Perhaps “the terrors of war, genocide and existence in the great metropolis [...] in the disillusioning context of the postmodern United States of America” (Beville 2009, p.98) accelerates the splintering of identity associated with depersonalization disorder.

Beville asserts that “literary postmodernism expands to examine the self as alienated from the community and also itself” (p.46). Postmodern investigations of psychological identity thus approach the depersonalized self. *In the Lake of the Woods*, “The Vietnam in Me,” *Fight Club* (in both novel and filmic form), and *Black Swan* all examine individuals experiencing the isolating effects of depersonalization disorder in a postmodern context.

Postmodern Pessimism and Perpetual *Déjà vu*.

“It seems to me that I have become a statue on the banks of the river of time . . .”The Journal In time of Henri-Frederic Amiel (Amiel, 1885).

For those afflicted with depersonalization disorder “time often does not unfold in the normal manner; past, present and future can seem indistinguishable, as if they were all happening at once” (Simeon and Abugel 2006, p.62). Postmodernist principles of temporality are thus relatable to the sensation of depersonalization. Constable notes in “Postmodernism and Film,” that Frederic Jameson’s seminal essay, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, regards the “sense of being condemned to the perpetual present [as being] emblematic of the postmodern condition” (2004, p.49). In this regard, Jameson links postmodernity to schizophrenia, as “the schizophrenic does not have a chronological sense of past, present, and future, and consequently lacks any sense of the self as a coherent identity that persists across time” (p.49). However, Jameson’s Lacanian diagnosis — intriguing as it may be — is lacking in psychiatric precision. Simeon and Abugel explain that, “[d]istortion of time perception is a frequent complaint of depersonalized individuals” (p.61), while recent developments in the clinical understanding of schizophrenia suggest that “time sense and ability to perceive subjective duration is *unaffected* in schizophrenics” (Eisler, et al., 2008, p.100). The flow of chronological time is perhaps not as bound to language as Jameson argues and there seems to be an extralinguistic dimension to the postmodern disintegration of linear temporality. Therefore, the paradigm of the depersonalized self is perhaps more appropriate than Jameson’s notion of the schizophrenic, with regard to O’Brien’s *In the Lake of the Woods* and his essay “The Vietnam in Me,” and Palahniuk’s and Fincher’s *Fight Club*. In each text, “[t]hrough the projection of an inner world, the represented world is psychologically motivated and reordered” (Bernaerts 2009, p.380) by the dissociative effects of depersonalization.

The episodic quality and chronological instability of *In the Lake of the Woods* seems reflec-

tive of depersonalization disorder. The “dizzy disconnected feeling” (O’Brien 1995, p.42) of depersonalization is often an episodic experience, with episodes “lasting hours, days, weeks or months at a time” (Simeon 2004, p.345). The structure of *In the Lake of the Woods* mimics this disorientating experience, focussing on the psychological shifts in time that our narrator supposes Wade underwent. During moments of isolation in Vietnam, Wade’s “internal terrain [becomes] blurry” as he feels “increasingly cut off from the men [of Charlie Unit], cut off from Kathy and his own future” (O’Brien, p.39). Wade drifts toward an isolated island of internal dissociation in moments of seclusion. During moments of increased mental stress and fatigue — instances ranging from his political humiliation to the suffering he endures whilst searching for Kathy — Wade’s detachment from his own identity intensifies. Upon attempting to conjure up a “neat chronology of events,” he glides “above ordinary time” (p.133), though he ultimately fails to remember the events of that night just as our authors fail to arrive at any decisive conclusion. Numb to time, Wade is unable to heal.

O’Brien fictionalised the struggle he underwent in 1994 when writing *In the Lake of the Woods*. This struggle is documented in his essay “The Vietnam in Me,” which experiments with a distorted narrative on a formal level. Like Wade, and the narrator of *In the Lake of the Woods*, O’Brien finds himself unable to write up a “neat chronology of events” in his personal essay describing his torturous depression (1994). Like *In the Lake of the Woods*, the essay suffers from disorientating temporal blurring, mimetic of O’Brien’s own mental state upon composition of the essay. The essay fluctuates between recollections of his original Vietnam experience of 1969, his return “home” to Viet Nam in February 1994 and sleepless nights with “suicide on [his] mind” in Cambridge, Massachusetts, during the summer of 1994. The document is — among other things — a record of the creative struggle he underwent in his writing, the difficulty of “wrap[ping] words around a few horrid truths.” Again, his creative struggle seems symptomatic of depersonalization. Simeon notes depersonalization is linked with “a decline in ability to focus on tasks, especially complex ones” (2004, p.345). The writing process for our narrator and O’Brien is a struggle, neither can “remember much,” but in constructing John Wade — their depersonalized self — both recover elements of their own “vanished life” (1995, p.301), though healing is hindered without a linear sense of time for both the anonymous researcher of *In the Lake of the Woods* and O’Brien.

Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* similarly distorts narrative chronology in its depiction of the depersonalized Jack. Bernaerts notes that “[i]n *Fight Club*, the products of the protagonist’s sick mind are constitutive to the narrative” (2009, p.374). From the beginning of the novel our anonymous narrator is aware that his alter-ego Tyler Durden is “a dissociative personality disorder” (Palahniuk, p.165), “but in the first part of the text he does not enlighten the reader on this matter” (Bernaerts, p.374). Jack’s split identity “is cleverly obfuscated by a telling alternation of present and past tense” (p.375). Jack’s story opens with the image of Tyler “pushing a gun in [Jack’s] mouth” (Palahniuk, p.11) which is distorted by

constant references to the past, present and future: “Tyler and I were best friends. People are always asking, did I know about Tyler Durden [...] The building we’re standing on won’t be here in ten minutes” (pp.11-12). Jack’s narrative strategy is thus mimetic of the disorientating experience of depersonalization disorder, as time does not follow a linear structure. In *Fight Club*, “past, present and future [are] indistinguishable, as if they were all happening at once” (Simeon and Abugel 2006, p.62).

In Fincher’s *Fight Club*, Jack similarly fluctuates between episodes of security, confusion, and panic until he comes to the painful realisation that he is suffering from a serious identity crisis. Jack views himself from a detached third-person perspective symptomatic of depersonalization disorder during moments of heightened emotional states, with such instances including, but not limited to, underground boxing matches and sexual intercourse. In these moments, Jack is convinced that he is merely watching Tyler, rather than taking part in the actions he describes. The sensation of depersonalization for Jack during intercourse is captured in a dream sequence with a hyperbolised blurring of the *mis-en-scène* objectifying the subjective daze-like “perpetual *Déjà vu*” — or the “perpetual present [...] of the postmodern condition” (Constable, p.49) — Jack is experiencing. Jack awakes convinced his encounter with Marla Singer (played by Helena Bonham Carter) was nothing more than a dream. Jack’s inability to distinguish between dream and reality seems symptomatic of depersonalization disorder: “descriptions of depersonalization experiences [include] feeling like you are in a dream” (Simeon 2004, p.344). Jack is a mere spectator in his own life. Fincher translates Jack’s pivotal realisation in a montage sequence placing Norton in a series of familiar scenarios originally shot with Pitt acting as protagonist. Approaching the borders of mental collapse, Jack reflects: “Is Tyler my bad dream or am I Tyler’s?” Jack aptly iterates the depersonalized person’s inability to infer identity and to distinguish between competing realities.

Fincher’s *Fight Club* experiments with subtle use of filmic editing techniques in order to distort a linear narrative. *Fight Club* employs a conventional framing device: Jack’s tale — as in the novel — begins at the end of the story with Jack and Tyler “shar[ing] a conversation which digresses into a depiction of the events that culminate in that conversation” (Isaacs 2005, p.133). Isaacs notes that “[t]he Tyler persona intrudes into Norton’s narration in fleeting still-shots, mirroring Tyler’s splicing of frames into a master narrative” (p.133). This “bold and remarkably subtle intrusion into linear, cause-effect narrative” (p.133) seems symptomatic of the “fragmentation of the coherence, unity and continuity of the sense of self” (Simeon 2004, p.344) associated with depersonalization disorder on the formal level of film editing. The depersonalized *doppelgänger* Durden subtly disrupts narrative continuity.

The Journal Intime of Henri-Frederic Amiel, the meticulous diary of an obscure Swiss philosopher, “consistently and eloquently expresses the experience of chronic, lifelong depersonalization” (Simeon and Abugel 2006, p.130). Amiel describes a disconnection

from time — frozen in an infinite present, “a statue on the banks of the river of time” (p.145) — akin to the postmodernist perception of a perennial present found in Jameson’s aforementioned writing. Cast adrift from the flow of time, postmodernity is similarly depersonalized. O’Brien, Palahniuk and Fincher all employ “narrative delirium” (Bernaerts 2009, p.374) from the depersonalized person’s perspective mimicking an anachronistic meandering of time. Numb to time, Wade is lost in a labyrinth of uncertainty in O’Brien’s metafictional mystery; Jack of Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* is condemned to an insane asylum, imprisoned in a state of perpetual *Déjà vu*; while Fincher’s Jack attempts suicide. Unable to feel time, “there is no past, no future” for the sufferers of depersonalization disorder (Simeon and Abugel 2006, p.10).

Postmodern Metaphor and Cinematic Detachment.

“I imagine myself seeing life as if it were played like a film.”Feeling Unreal: Depersonalization and the Loss of the Self (in Simeon and Abugel, 2006).

Simeon and Abugel note that “[o]ne of the many intriguing metaphors used by depersonalized people is that they feel as if they are viewing themselves, as if watching a movie” (2006, p.63). Constable observes that Jean Baudrillard’s *America* (1988) associates post-modern America’s national derealization with film. Baudrillard states that “it is not the least of America’s charms that even outside the movie theatres the whole country is cinematic. The desert you pass is like the set of a Western, the city a screen of signs and formulas” (quoted in Constable 2004, p.44). Constable summarises: “it is this sense of a reality that has been completely pervaded by cinema, resulting in the apprehension of reality as film, which is one of the key metaphors of the postmodern” (p.44). Thus, post-modern ideology can be seen as being symptomatic of depersonalization disorder. *In the Lake of the Woods*, *Fight Club* (in both novel and filmic format), and *Black Swan* all engage with the postmodern “blurring of fiction and reality” and each text investigates “the subsequent problem of self in a hyperreal world” in a nation that has been constructed by cinema (Beville 2009, p.68).

O’Brien’s *In the Lake of the Woods* captures a cinematic sensation of detachment and extends it to America’s own self-detachment. Heberle notes that “[t]he name John Wade sounds like a pinched, adenoidal echo of the American cultural icon ‘John Wayne’ ” (2001, p.217). O’Brien crosses traditional media boundaries in alluding to John Wayne. Our narrator is so completely detached from reality, that he envisions his fragmented other self as John Wade, a confused version of John Wayne. The allusion is appropriate for O’Brien’s extension of depersonalization to America within *In the Lake of the Woods*, as Wayne’s early onscreen personas were integral in erasing the “evil” from America’s “national mythology” (O’Brien, 1994). Wayne’s pre-revisionist Westerns and his Vietnam directorial excursion in *The Green Berets* (1968), embodied the naive notion that “the most important effect of the frontier ha[d] been the promotion of democracy” (Turner, 1921). Typically,

Wayne's westerns evoked deluded mythologies of American settlement and stand as a testament to America's ability to dissociate itself from its violent past through fabrication and myth. America has experienced serious disruptions in collective consciousness, memory and identity akin to the detachment within *In the Lake of the Woods*. America's history has been thoroughly depersonalized through Hollywood. O'Brien thus links not only "individual and collective trauma" (Melley 2003, p.115), but individual and national depersonalization.

Palahniuk's novel equates dissociative personality disorders, such as depersonalization disorder, with the cinematic practice of projection, as Tyler is both a "movie projectionist" (*Fight Club* p.25), and is described as a "projection" of Jack's psyche (p.168). Narrating Tyler's first encounter with Marla, a moment of severe detachment for Jack, Jack recalls Tyler's experience of a reality invaded by Hollywood. Jack's depersonalized self strolls toward Marla's apartment, "down a noisy hallway with canned television laughter coming through the doors" and "[e]very couple of seconds an actress screams or actors die screaming in a rattle of bullets" (p.60). Recalling his first fist fight with Tyler, Jack compares his act of self destructive violence to "every cowboy movie we'd ever seen" (pp.52-53), recalling O'Brien's allusion to John Wayne. Jack's detachment is described in terms typical of depersonalization disorder, as his reality and sense of self are violently pervaded by Hollywood. Jack aptly summarises his condition, stating: "Tyler is a projection. He is a dissociative personality disorder" (p.168), thus equating his experience of depersonalization with film, a comparison typical of sufferers of depersonalization and a metaphor central to postmodernism.

Fincher's *Fight Club* locates depersonalization within the movie theatre, adding a metafictional depth to Palahniuk's novel. Jack explains — addressing his audience directly in a metafictional aside — that as a hobby Tyler enjoys "splicing single frames of pornography into family films" (Fincher, 1999). Fincher "plays with movie making conventions, in particular the relation of the film to the audience" and the fourth wall is completely demolished by Durden's presence (Browning 2010, p.138). Juhasz notes in "*Fight Club*'s most egregiously reflexive scene," which comes during this aside, "we observe our doubles — the viewers of the movie [Tyler] is projecting within our movie — appearing understandably shaken, but uncertain as to why, as the nasty frame [a single frame of pornography] is subliminally cut into their movie" (2001, p.214). The scene extends the dissociative crisis of its protagonist to the audience, who, for a brief moment, view a depersonalised image of themselves onscreen. Through metafictional reflexivity, Fincher's *Fight Club* extends diegetic depersonalization to its audience, whilst demonstrating a postmodern permeable border between reality and fiction.

Fincher's *Fight Club* blurs the boundary between reality and film further, extending the motif of Durden's subliminal sabotage to the closing segments of the film. During the film's final frames which depict a seriously wounded, yet relieved, Jack, united with his love

interest Marla, there is an insertion of several frames of pornography. Tyler's persona — Fincher suggests in a subtle manner — has transcended the restraints of the diegetic world, thus blurring the boundary between diegetic and non-diegetic worlds. In terms of the depersonalization disorder subtext within *Fight Club*, the significance of this cinematic subtlety is twofold: Fincher blurs the border between reality and film, thus reproducing a symptom of depersonalization disorder, whilst acknowledging that “persons [such as Jack/Tyler] not only exist in our society, but indeed must exist” (Dostoevsky 1864, p.90).

Black Swan focuses on Nina's psychological descent into a reality distorted by fiction. In *Black Swan*, “Nina develops a dual, distorted state of mind in which the borders between reality and fiction slowly fade away” (Cross Media Storytelling, 2011). Nina is eventually unable to distinguish between the reality of her performance and the fictitious world of *Swan Lake*. Aronofsky seeks to extend this unreality to his audience through focalising *Black Swan* through Nina's detached and distorted perspective. The night of the production premiere of *Swan Lake* demonstrates this. Playing the black swan, Nina actually envisions her own metamorphosis into a swan-human hybrid. Though only Nina imagines this distortion, we view the transformation from a detached perspective. The conflation of a distorted reality presented through an omniscient shot is suggestive of depersonalization disorder. We view Nina's distorted reality through a detached third-person perspective, akin to sufferers' descriptions of depersonalization disorder.

For the postmodern subject life may seem unreal. Submersed in a cinematic world, unreality may hold more truth than life itself. The depersonalized subject may endure a similar existence. *In the Lake of the Woods*, *Fight Club*, and *Black Swan* all depict protagonists in a state of existential disconnection. Far removed from self, identity, and reality, life has become like watching a film, blurring “the borders that exist between the real and the fictional” (Beville 2009, p.15).

The Poetics of Depersonalization: Mirror Imagery and the *Doppelgänger*.

“[W]hen I looked in a mirror I gave a cry and my heart shook; for it was not myself I saw but the grimacing face of a demon . . .”Also Sprach Zarathustra (Nietzsche, quoted in Eisner).

People suffering from depersonalization can experience “an altered sense of selfhood that dominates their mental lives” (Simeon and Abugel 2006, p.6). This sensation of “depersonalization is intensely isolating and fear provoking by nature” (p.154). Simeon notes that “looking in the mirror and feeling detached from one's image” is a common sensation experienced during one's depersonalization and is perhaps the most terrifying symptom of the disorder (2004, p.344). This lurid dissociative disorder began to emerge as a recognised psychiatric phenomenon throughout Europe “in the mid- to late nineteenth century,

when dramatic social changes gave rise to intellectual and philosophical explorations the world had not yet seen” (Simeon and Abugel 2006, p.50). Intriguingly, the *doppelgänger* of Gothic literature began to surface contemporaneously in texts such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) and Edgar Allan Poe’s “William Wilson” (1839). In her monograph outlining the genre Gothic-postmodernism, Beville asserts the importance of the *doppelgänger* in expressing alterity: “the fragmentation of the human subject can be seen in the exploitation and exploration of the *doppelgänger*” (2009, p.64). Frankenstein’s monster can signify a disowned son, disgusting abjection or dissociated self. In relation to the *doppelgänger*, Beville regards “the mirror as a Gothic-postmodernist motif [which] emerges as central to preoccupations with self as the origin of terror” (p.119). *In the Lake of the Woods*, *Fight Club* (both novel and film), and *Black Swan* all employ mirror imagery in spawning the *doppelgänger*. In each text, the protagonist is met with a *doppelgänger* in the mirror. These motifs combine to evoke trepidations regarding an altered, depersonalized sense of selfhood in a postmodern world.

In the Lake of the Woods presents us with eerie imagery symptomatic of the process of depersonalization. This imagery operates on two distinct levels. O’Brien attempts to reflect a traumatic detachment in his description of Wade. Wade’s unhealthy preoccupation with mirrors is rooted in his troubled childhood. Following his father’s suicide and, years later, his return from Vietnam in the November of 1969, the mirror becomes the surface for Wade’s growing depersonalization. Wade stares into the mirror whilst talking to one form of his splintered self, Sorcerer, his childhood *doppelgänger*: “Hey Sorcerer [...] [h]ow’s tricks?” (p.41) Wade murmurs to the mirror. This literal detachment from the self is later covertly extended through the use of reflective imagery from the author’s “fabricated self” (Heberle, p.248) to O’Brien.

O’Brien’s narrator opens his report with a description of the lake which envelops his imaginative reconstruction, thus extending the reflective motif of the novel. He announces that “the wilderness was [...] like one great big curving mirror” (1995, p.1). The reflective quality of the lake is sustained throughout *In the Lake of the Woods*, until our narrator describes how Wade found himself “adrift on a sea of glass” surrounded by “reflections everywhere” (p.280). The internalised “box of mirrors” (p.159) of Wade’s troubled psyche is ultimately externalised by authorial speculation. In creating the environment of *In the Lake of the Woods*, O’Brien extends his mirror motif, gesturing towards his own sensation of depersonalization. In staring at the lake, O’Brien is haunted by his *doppelgängers*, in the blurred forms of John Wade and the anonymous narrator — the unhealed psychological scars of O’Brien’s war experience. The reflective sentiment within the use of the mirror motif thus demonstrates its potential for dissociation and the power of O’Brien’s prose.

O’Brien seems to hint at the aetiology of his own identity crisis in his essay “The Vietnam in Me.” O’Brien observes a schism in Saigon and declares the duality of “Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City” to be “[a] massive identity crisis,” a *doppelgänger*-like split rooted in violence.

O'Brien's title, which stresses the internalisation of his war experience with the preposition "in" ("The Vietnam *in* Me"), seems to suggest that O'Brien has felt a dissociative divide in his own identity, and the split is rooted in his war experience in Vietnam.

Beville argues, "the basic idea that identity is a fragmented and multiple 'thing' explodes when we realise that in our modern cities of glass, the mirror is everywhere" (2009, p.104). Palahniuk's prose captures this impression as Jack's world, prior to the arrival of his *doppelgänger*, is a metropolis of glass: "All the outside walls are floor-to-ceiling glass. Everything where I work is floor-to-ceiling glass" (1996, p.137). Tyler's emergence marks the fracturing of these reflective surfaces. Jack's *doppelgänger* not only invades Jack's mirror: "Tyler's upstairs in my bedroom, looking at his teeth in *my* mirror" (p.65 emphasis added), but later shatters it: "I can see the floor-to-ceiling windows on the third floor of my office building are blown out [by Tyler]" (p.184). This signifies Jack's depersonalized state with a combination of the *doppelgänger* and mirror motifs. In Palahniuk's *Fight Club*, "[n]othing is static" (p.108), especially identity.

Fincher's *Fight Club* achieves a subtle mirror effect through the rigid symmetry of its framing. Prior to the revelation that Durden is the depersonalised *doppelgänger* of Jack, the compulsive symmetry suggests that Jack is gazing deeply into a mirror during his encounters with Durden. Outside the grim, chiaroscuro-ridden bar of their first physical confrontation, the internal framing poses both figures silhouetted facing each other in such a symmetrical fashion that, at a glance, the figures appear as if they are gazing at a reflective surface. The internal framing of the barroom door serves to complement the reflective sentiment of the scene. The instance is brief, yet suggestive of the crisis at hand. During their final confrontation, this visual motif is heightened. A menacing Durden appears at one side of a pane of glass outside the financial district that he hopes to bring crashing down, jeering at a hectic and bewildered Jack. Jack shoots the glass and Durden disappears, just as a reflection in a shattered mirror would. Despite Jack's attempt to escape his dark depersonalized self, Durden returns moments later for their final confrontation. Jack fails to outrun his reflection and the disorientating sensation of depersonalization dominates *Fight Club*. For Jack, "Tyler is a projection: "He's a dissociative personality disorder" (Palahniuk 1996, p.168). Fincher translates this disruption of identity through a subtle mirror motif in *Fight Club*.

Like O'Brien's Wade, Natalie Portman's Nina becomes surrounded by "reflections everywhere" (O'Brien 1995, p.280) in *Black Swan*. Reflective surfaces dominate Aronofsky's *mis-en-scène* from the earliest sequences of the movie. These mirrors objectify Nina's fractured identity and, as the pressures of balletic perfection take a huge emotional strain on Nina, her crisis culminates in the mirror. Aronofsky's hallucinatory vision of the dark side of high art achieves its nightmarish depiction of detachment within the mirror world of Nina's tortured psyche. During her fitting for *Swan Lake*, Nina's reflection assumes a consciousness of its own and in a moment of lurid detachment, Aronofsky, through a claustro-

phobic over-shoulder close-up shot, depicts Nina's reflection turning to meet her. Moments later she is greeted by her metaphorical double Lily, her understudy, played by Mila Kunis. The confusion of literal and figurative reflections distresses Nina and ultimately consumes her. In a moment of depersonalized delusion, Nina attacks the backstage mirror wounding only herself, yet Nina is convinced she has killed Lily. During the ensuing state of depersonalized delirium, Nina thoroughly detaches herself from her own consciousness. She imagines dragging Lily to a vacated toilet cubicle to conceal the body, though in reality the only real casualties of this lurid scene have been the mirror and Nina. We later find Lily quite unharmed. Nina is submersed in a nightmare underworld of the *doppelgänger* from which she never escapes. Aronofsky's bleak meditation on America's dissociated daughter offers viewers a disturbing glimpse into the distressing world of depersonalization through the fractured psyche of Nina. Ultimately, Nina, like countless other postmodern protagonists before her, becomes "lost in the cubist collage that results from a fractured identity" (Beville 2009, p.185).

In each text, the world of the mirror, in Gothic-postmodern fashion, is a poeticised location of loss and traumatic detachment. Glancing within unleashes a dark world of dissociative terror haunted by the *doppelgänger*. For O'Brien and his anonymous researcher, for Jack of *Fight Club*, and Nina of *Black Swan*, the mirror reveals the monstrous instability of identity lurking within, an idea captured by Nietzsche in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*: "when I looked into a mirror I gave a cry and my heart shook; for it was not myself I saw but the grimacing face of a demon" (Nietzsche quoted in Eisner, p.129). Interpreted in light of psychiatric theory regarding depersonalization, each text can contribute to our understanding of this increasingly common psychiatric disorder and can perhaps combat the underrecognition and underdiagnosis which contribute to the fear lurking in the reflection of a fractured identity.

Conclusion.

"l'enfer, c'est les autres" Huis Clos (Sartre 1944, p.95).

Sartre's famous declaration that "hell is other people" is applicable to depersonalization disorder. "The mind is its own place" (Milton i, line 254) and hell can manifest itself in what can seem like another person, a depersonalized identity. The postmodern aspects of *In the Lake of the Woods*, "The Vietnam in Me," *Fight Club* and *Black Swan* are closely linked to the hell of a fractured, depersonalized identity. These texts are structurally mimetic of, and metaphorically attached to, both postmodernism and depersonalization. The *doppelgängers* lurking in the fractured reflections of the protagonists voice the psychological terrors of our age: a separation from self, the hell of a stranger invading the psyche. Interpreting these texts as points of intersection between depersonalization disorder and the postmodern condition can aid an understanding of both this hellish sense of a split

self and of the texts themselves. Beville notes that for postmodernism, “identity becomes recognisable as the unsolved and impenetrable mystery of our time” (2009, p.102). Understanding the potential otherness of the psyche, its instability, and innate capability for estrangement can perhaps provide some answers to this mystery.

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Review — Understanding Limerick: Social Exclusion and Change by Dr. Niamh Hourigan (ed)

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Last year I visited the Moyross estate in Limerick in the company of Limerick Regeneration Chairman Brendan Kenny. As part of my research, I interviewed Mr. Kenny and observed the work of the local community in cleaning and maintaining their community. I was also shown some of the darker side of that estate, the burnt out houses, and more tragically, the places where people had been shot and killed, victims of Limerick's gang wars.

My overriding memory of the Moyross estate was twofold; the sense of determination of the local community to get on with their lives, and the fact that the estate in which they live was so badly planned. The estate consists of a reasonably good stock of houses, but it sprawls on forever, and there seems to be no way out and nowhere to go, particularly at the rear of the estate where much of the trouble seemed to be occurring.

According to the social geographer David Harvey, bad planning in urban areas lies at the heart of much that is wrong in contemporary urban societies. Moyross provides us with an example of the societal outcomes of poor planning practices, which are subsequently compounded by a lack of community resources, poor community policing and endemically high levels of unemployment. These factors, as the recent riots in the UK demonstrate, can provide a recipe for social breakdown and criminality on a large scale.

Understanding Limerick contains a series of studies aimed at providing a wider understanding of some of the factors which underpin the problems of social exclusion in Limerick's marginalised periphery. The contributors are primarily a mix of Limerick based academics, community workers or, as in the case of Hourigan, a Cork based academic with family roots in Limerick. This local academic flavour provides us with the essential regional authenticity demanded of Irish socio-cultural expression, while maintaining a rich theoretical discourse on issues of urban marginality.

The opening chapters locate two of the main issues required in the process of 'Understanding Limerick'. Social Geographer Des McCaffery outlines the key elements which have emerged in the spatial divides of post Celtic Tiger society in the region, while Sociologist and Criminologist Giaran McCullagh skilfully illustrates the manner in which pockets of serious crime in particular estates underpin the relatively low level of overall crime in

the city, and the manner in which media coverage has distorted wider understandings of these issues.

In the second section of the book, Editor Niamh Hourigan takes the reader through a series of chapters on salient areas such as social exclusion and divided communities, organised crime and policing, societal fear and gangland feuds in a comprehensive discussion where sociological understandings and localised narratives are interwoven in an articulate but accessible manner, which reveals Hourigan's growing reputation as a commentator of note in contemporary Irish society.

The book's final section combines local academic perspectives from a researcher perspective, bringing together studies on masculinity, social capital, media coverage and citizenship from a range of academics including Patricia Kelleher and Pat O'Connor, Eileen Humphries, Eoin Devereux, Amanda Hayes and Martin Power. Essentially, this collection of studies succeeds in the very critical task of giving voice to those at the margins in Limerick's most economically deprived neighbourhoods.

Moreover, the book provides valuable social and academic insights into one of Ireland's most protracted community issues, insights which should be read by researchers, social commentators and policy makers alike. As such, it represents a notable landmark in Irish sociological inquiry, an achievement for which the book's contributors should be commended.

Review — The Chinese Communist Party as Organizational Emperor: culture, reproduction, and transformation by Zheng Yongnian

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International Relations traditionally takes the nation-state as its unit of analysis. These are the players in the arena of world politics. Or at least this was the case. Increasingly, there is the realisation that this identification of nation-states in International Relations is no longer sustainable. New players are making themselves heard, whether they are terrorist cells working transnationally for radical goals, NGO's lobbying to change national policies, or multinational conglomerates with greater spending power than most countries. It is worthwhile re-examining — with these new players in the field — some of the assumptions regarding the *nation-state* as being a self-evident player. There is, currently, a cultural turn taking place in many disciplines and this is particularly evident in political analysis of East Asia. Scholars are investigating cultural reasons for the failure of democracy to take root in many nations. Some scholars are explaining existing nations in their own historical terms rather than applying the nation-state concept, which is a European historical development in the first place. These are the thoughts and questions that Zheng poses in consideration of China not as a nation-state, or party-state, but as a continuation and transformation of the traditional emperorship of Chinese civilisation. Taking direction from Emile Durkheim, Zheng seeks to explain *social facts as things*. What kind of players are the Communist Party of China and the People's Republic of China? What is the relation between the two and, in turn, their relation to the rest of the world? Is what came to be understood as the nation-state — and in China's case the party-state — truly applicable despite how widely such a description is used? Who and what is the Chinese state?

The identity of the state in Europe, in modern times, rests on the territorial integrity of a sovereign people with the right to self-determination. With the French Revolution and subsequent fall of monarchies and rise of parliamentary systems, the political party established itself as an active representation of the interests of a particular segment of society that attempts to garner a proportional amount of power in the control of the state. This description of the state and the political party works well in Europe and is a product of European historical forces. But, as Zheng argues, this description is not at all viable when one looks to China. In China, territorial integrity was not recognised by either the Emperor

or his subjects. Since the foundation of the Chinese state as we know it today, we can see that the 'political party' in the guise of the Communist Party of China [CCP] pre-existed the state and subsequently believes itself to have the right to guide the 'product' of its labours through the appointments it makes into the governmental system. The importance of the CCP is recognisable not least because its party membership now exceeds the population of France and is rising.

Many of the awkward terms we hear about Chinese society and state are often a result of the prescriptive identities we place on China — 'post-communist', 'capitalism with Chinese characteristics', 'post-socialist', 'China in transition' — Zheng argues that we need a new paradigm that can understand China on its own terms so as not to enforce Western schemas that simply do not apply and result in increasing debate with little applicable content. The paradigms he dismisses are embedded in both European and American traditions where in Northern America New Institutionalism dominates and post-Marxism in Europe (generally speaking). When Western academics look to China, they often do so according to behavioural norms that attempt to typify how China *should* be acting rather than attempting to identify China in terms of how it *is* acting. Zheng's analysis draws on the strengths of both traditions but with a firm anthropological basis interpreting Chinese political actors as products of a Chinese historical context.

This title expertly delineates different lines and realms of power with the political apparatus of the People's Republic of China. The introduction and first chapter are particularly nuanced in drawing out the current state of China Studies identifying leading authors and their strengths and weaknesses. The book can be read straight through from beginning to end but the structure of themed chapters allows readers to pick and choose according to interest or need. This will particularly suit undergraduate students as long as they remain aware of Zheng's primary aim of arguing for the CCP as an Organisation Emperorship. Divided thematically, these chapters serve as both introductions to themed concerns and also as steps in his larger argument based in chapter eight. As a whole this structure is well wrought out allowing the content to be used whether one agrees or not with Zheng's primary argument. It is in the final chapter that Zheng concentrates on his proposal with the other prior seven chapters serving to elucidate the nature of the political and bureaucratic system inside China.

Zheng's book is dense in terms of both style and content and is symptomatic of the wealth of information that is attainable in his title. Yet beyond its application of understanding China as a new transfiguration of emperorship, the manner in which it details and explains the inner workings of the political system in China makes it a worthy purchase for any undergraduate student of China Studies. It is a much-needed and welcome title that offers an alternative method of understanding the Chinese system and the Chinese state apart and beyond the limitations of Western political discourse.

Review — *Our Lady of Controversy: Alma López's Irreverent Apparition* by Gaspar de Alba, Alicia and Alma López (eds)

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The image of La Virgen de Guadalupe is highly visible in Mexican and Mexican American culture, as evidenced by the ubiquitous presence of statuettes, portraits, memorabilia, tattooed bodies and graffiti art. She has been connected to notions of identity and nationalism as well as religious tradition, with visual representations appearing in prominent national and social events such as the Mexican Revolution and the United Farm Workers protests in California. In their edited collection, *Our Lady of Controversy: Alma López's Irreverent Apparition* (University of Texas Press, 2011), Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Alma López provide a unique and intimate view into the consequences of visual feminist revisions of La Virgen de Guadalupe.

Written as part of the Chicana Matters Series, this collection gathers a host of respected scholars in the field of Chicana feminism, history and theory. Both López and Gaspar de Alba are noted Chicana lesbian feminists and students of Chicana feminism will be familiar with the works of novelist and theorist Emma Pérez and historian Deena Gonzalez (recently listed as one of the fifty most important living historians in the U.S. today).

The piece of art at the centre of the controversy, entitled "Our Lady", was part of the exhibition "Cyber Arte: Tradition Meets Technology", held by the Museum of International Folk Art (MOIFA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The inclusion of "Our Lady", a digital image of a brown-skinned woman with bare midriff and legs, standing proudly and gazing out at the viewer, angered local Catholic representatives and Chicano nationalists to such a degree that their vocal opposition to and organised protests against the artwork brought the Museum to the attention of the national media. The controversy raised a myriad of issues including the separation (or lack thereof) of state and religion, freedom of speech, artistic expression, religious expression, gender, sexuality, economy, immigration, race and tradition.

The book is structured around the notion of chiasmus, a figure of speech that offers a way of exploring opposing ideas by reversing the second half of an expression, thereby offering a new insight into the original idea. Gaspar de Alba offers Mae West's famous line "It's not about the men in my life, but about the life in my men" as an example of chiasmus in her introduction to the collection. In a similar way, each chapter takes

arguments made in opposition to the art of López and repositions them from a feminist perspective. Five of the eleven chapters also employ the chiasmic structure in their title and as a structuring trope. While most of the arguments against “Our Lady” bemoan the lack of respect for the traditional Catholic representation of La Virgen de Guadalupe, *Our Lady of Controversy* confronts the heteropatriarchal structures of the church, reinforced by traditional ceremony, and asks: Who owns the image of La Virgen de Guadalupe? Why can't women re-imagine her in ways that enable identification and not just veneration?

Luz Calvo's essay *Art Comes for the Archbishop: The Semiotics of Contemporary Chicana Feminism and the Work of Alma López*, provides a solid grounding of the Nahua and Hispanic religious and artistic symbols found in both the image of La Virgen de Guadalupe that is said to have miraculously appeared on the *tilma* (cloak) of a native Indian in 1581, and also in the digital image of “Our Lady”, created by Alma López in 1999. The layers of storytelling, history and mythologies woven into the artistic images expose the reader to the complex nuances at play in the work being protested. For readers unacquainted with the story of La Virgen de Guadalupe, this essay also provides a glimpse into the social, cultural and historical issues at play as well as the religious. All of these points are taken and expanded on by other contributors to the collection. The problematics of male-centred discourse in issues of female representation are discussed by Clara Román-Odio, Emma Pérez, Christina Serna, Kathleen Fitzcallahan Jones and Catriona Esquibel Rueda. The more personal writings by Alma López at the beginning and conclusion of the book decisively outline the personal impact of the protests on the artist, while curator Tey Marianna Nunn provides an insightful reflection on contemporary Latina/o art as well as the personal and political implications of her involvement with the “Cyber Arte: Tradition Meets Technology” exhibit.

Each chapter, original in its own right, builds upon points and opinions raised in other chapters, giving the entire collection a sense of communal dialogue and debate rather than simply a collection of isolated voices speaking within the rubric of a common theme. This idea of community is furthered by the inclusion of an 18 page appendix of 'Selected Viewers Comments' from the original exhibition. Both positive and negative remarks are transcribed into this section, giving a chance for both sides of the community to carry their point even into the publication of a book clearly arguing in favour of the art and artist. Moreover, included in the book is a CD of 'I Love Lupe', comprising a video interview with artists Ester Hernandez, Alma López and Yolanda López (no relation). This digital chapter integrates the notion of the original exhibition, “Cyber Arte: Tradition Meets Technology”, by combining digital technology with the traditional book format. By allowing a community of artists speak directly to the reader, the DVD also illustrates how Alma López is actually part of an ongoing Chicana artistic tradition of reinterpreting La Virgen de Guadalupe.

The book constitutes a rich source of historical, political, feminist, religious, social and

artistic issues pertinent not only in New Mexico but also in the wider Chicana/o community. The recent protests in opposition to "Our Lady" being exhibited in University College Cork as part of a Chicana exhibition give testament to the importance attributed to the representation of the Mother of Christ in patriarchal Catholic communities. They also highlighted the necessity for a book like *Our Lady of Controversy* in other Catholic communities, in order to create spaces for women to openly question that patriarchal tradition. The editors have provided a comprehensive, scholarly rebuttal to arguments against feminist revisions of a female figure within their own religious tradition. A definitive read for anyone interested in American and Mexican religious studies, feminism, Chicana art, history or political science.