

Chapter 3

**EMERGING FORMS OF IDENTITY ONLINE:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTENDING
THEORISING ABOUT IDENTITY THROUGH
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

Natilene Bowker¹

School of Information and Social Sciences
Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Turkle (1995, p. 13) has argued that “identity on the computer is the sum of your distributed presence.” The purpose of this chapter is to consider emerging forms of identity construction and performance within online spaces, and to extend ideas for theorising about and conceptualising identity within social psychology. The chapter also aims to highlight the relevance of textual analysis in contributing to an understanding of these emerging identities. There is clear evidence of the capacity to construct identity online through the immediacy of textual communication, self-reflection and defined spaces for public and private self-presentation. Combined with immersive virtual worlds and intertextuality, identity construction and performance can vary from identity tourism and identity expansion to hybridised identities. Furthermore, one’s identity performance remains intact when one is

¹ Senior Lecturer, Psychology. Email: Natilene.Bowker@openpolytechnic.ac.nz

physically absent (such as via a Facebook page or Linked-In profile), and can be continuously modified at one's discretion. Goffman (1959) has demonstrated that presenting oneself effectively relies on the ability to cater to specific audiences as well as maintaining their separation. Having control over information selection online affords a greater capacity to negotiate and manoeuvre one's identity construction and performance. Research has also shown how one's embodied experience is not only communicated through text but simultaneously constructs that experience, constituting an authentic experience. The division between what is real and what is virtual becomes irrelevant. Removing the correspondence between representation and reality within computer-mediated environments (Poster, 1997) and within the construction of digital information contests traditional meaning-making. Data analysis that involves the interpretation of text is ideally suited to understanding identity construction and performance online. Any interpretation of an event is not only mediated by language, but is also constituted by language. With the constantly changing social landscapes online, discursive analyses recognize that meaning is also constantly moving and transforming. Secondly, the subjectivity of self-reflection made possible through public and private online spaces is consistent with the subjective interpretation of language held by a discursive approach.

INTRODUCTION

With the variety of online contexts for presenting one's self and associated identities, one of the aims of this chapter is to highlight the need to extend models for theorising about identity in social psychology. This may serve to better incorporate the various forms and functions of identity in online spaces. A second aim is to consider textual analysis through discourse as a means of understanding these emerging forms of identity. To begin, the chapter evaluates traditional theorising about identity as captured in social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1987). Other ways of conceptualising identity are considered with emphasis on distributed frameworks. This leads into a detailed description of emerging forms of identity construction and performance occurring in online spaces, including hybridised identities, anonymity, pseudonymity, and polynymity. The concern around online experiences as a valid form of experience is argued. The final section proposes the suitability of textual analysis through discourse as a way of interpreting individuals' experiences of identity online.

TRADITIONAL IDENTITY THEORISING

Tantamount to traditional theorising about the self and identity in social psychology is Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory (SIT). Tajfel posited that ingroup identity exists via its own favoured comparison to a relevant outgroup. It is this comparative distinction which functions to create a positive social identity and thereby enhance an individual's self-esteem. Turner's (1987) work extended SIT to include a cognitive process of self-categorisation, in which group salience over individual salience triggers psychological associations with relevant social groups in different social contexts.

It is important to identify some of the limitations embedded within SIT. Brown (2000) acknowledges that SIT cannot adequately represent the entirety of identity functions served via a social identity. For instance, Brewer (1991) suggests that equating social identity with group membership is too simplistic. As such, she argues that this ignores the fact that memberships are not always voluntary. Yet, in different contexts, one may possess varying degrees of choice over identification with a particular social identity. Within online environments, one has significant choice over which aspects of identity are on display, irrespective of whether physical appearance markers, like disability, clearly align one's identity with a visible social category (Bowker and Tuffin, 2002).

Brewer (1991) argues that SIT does not explain why individuals choose to identify with low-status groups. In the context of online environments, for instance, there are opportunities for people belonging to traditionally stigmatised identities (e.g. disability, minority ethnic groups) to gain collective power (McCaughey and Ayers, 2003; Bowker, 2008; Sack, 2000; Yang, 2010). While SIT does offer a number of strategies for the protection of low-status group identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), Brown (2000) argues that most of these strategies require more thorough explanation and validation.

The functions of identities are also many and varied. For instance, Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi and Cotting's (1999) work has highlighted opportunities for social interaction, self-insight, and interpersonal comparisons arising from the social identities of members of religious groups and sports teams. Research in online contexts shows how social identities function to challenge stereotypes and defend stigmatised identities (Chandler, 1998; Walker, 2000; Turkle, 1995), to facilitate extensive relational connections (Walker, 2000; Turkle, 1995), and to create opportunities for social and personal development (Berman and Bruckman, 2000; Bruckman, 1996; Turkle, 1996). These functions extend beyond SIT's intergroup comparison and subsequent gains in

self-esteem. Abrams (1992) is critical of SIT's primary focus on group comparison, which may ignore other identifying features including one's self-concept. Similarly, Deaux and Burke (2010) argue that while SIT has focused on identity along categorisation or group lines, it has focused minimally on the person in relation to identity.

OTHER WAYS OF IDENTITY THEORISING

"Individuals construct their own identity packages, both in their choice of categories and in the meaning they attach to a category" (Deaux, 1993, p. 6). Drawing on her work with Ethier (1990, 1994), analysing Hispanic university students' self-reported identities and associated characteristics, Deaux highlights how social identities differ in relation to the personal meanings they infer for individuals. To demonstrate from just two students in the sample, a Student identity and Hispanic identity represented very different configurations of characteristics. Deaux concluded that social identity categories embody very different meanings for individuals, to the extent that boundaries between personal and social identities may even be considered arbitrary. Indeed, she argues that these groupings of personal and social identity are inextricably connected, as each is needed to give meaning to the other. Consequently, personal constructions of meaning may undo conceptualised boundaries between social and personal identities.

A more flexible and fluid conceptualisation of the way social psychological concepts work to capture identity processes may begin with Brewer (1991, p. 476), who suggests that "the self-concept is expandable and contractable across different levels of social identity with associated transformations in the definition of self". Similarly, in discussing ways to advance research on identity, Cantwell and Martiny (2010) focus on identity change. They propose a dimensional framework for conceptualising identity, which falls along a continuum. Within this framework, identity is represented as "a distribution along the dimension of meaning" (p. 320). As such, identity can vary according to how widely dispersed or tightly distributed one's identity features are. Cantwell and Martiny tentatively suggest that the greater the flexibility in one's distributed identity, the less likely one may encounter the need for change in identity. On the other hand, one's distributed identity may narrow as one establishes clarity in a more cohesive self-definition.

A distributed notion of identity connects with Turkle's (1995) conceptualisation of how identity is configured in online and electronic

environments. Using the Windows operating system, she gives an example of a person who has four windows open on their computer. One window focuses on an academic assignment, while the other three encompass different online activities. Each context has the capacity to (re)present the user in different networks, including a simulation program, a reference network, and a word-processing program. Turkle (p. 13) argues that “identity on the computer is the sum of your distributed presence”. Ito et al. (2010) similarly highlight how the increased salience of distributed online networks in people’s lives serves to structure their learning and identity. Savin-Baden (2010, p. 35) suggests the term “identity expansion” to capture the capacity for expanding one’s voice, although typically the same voice, across multiple digital spaces.

A distributed identity also implies the existence of multiple identities simultaneously. Turkle (1995) considers the way multi-user domain players “move in and out” (p. 12) of active spaces according to their various activities. She points out that for some, this leads to a “cycling through” (p. 12) experience as their real world and virtual lives are presented as a series of contexts for engagement and reflection. Of particular interest is the fact that even when one is absent from an online context, one’s identity prevails in some form (which can also apply to one’s re-presentation through a Facebook page). Hence, Turkle argues for the notion of “parallel identities, parallel lives” (p. 14). Such parallelism facilitates conceptualising online and offline lives “with a surprising degree of equality” (p. 14).

Interestingly, Deaux and Burke (2010) argue that majority of contemporary theories of identity also infer some kind of notion of multiplicity in identity construction, no matter how remote. For instance, they point out how Tajfel’s (1978) theory of social identity acknowledges that individuals possess more than a single identity. In relation to Turner’s (1987) self-categorisation theory, Deaux and Burke hint at how the emergence of situational salience brings to light the influences for identities arising from differing social contexts. There is also research to support the psychological value of multiple identities, such as enhancement of psychological wellbeing, providing that identities are not in conflict and that identities have high importance (Brook, Garcia, and Fleming, 2008).

EMERGING FORMS OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND PERFORMANCE ONLINE

Beyond the existence of multiple identities possible within face-to-face and online contexts, online environments offer evolved and dynamic forms of identity construction and performance. Drawing on the literature, Talamo and Ligorio (2001) argue for three different dimensions underlying identity construction online, namely, anonymity versus identifiability, asynchronous versus synchronous communication, and textual versus visual communication. Lack of information about the body (as well as the presence of textual communication) affords a greater capacity to negotiate and manoeuvre one's self-presentation (Thomas, 2000). For instance, an avatar or homepage has the capacity to accentuate some features, while removing others. Talamo and Ligorio suggest that the combination of textual communication and visual icons bring about the construction of identity in a manner that would not be possible within a single medium. Moreover, the participatory nature of online media cultures means that production and consumption processes are intertwined (Ito et al., 2010) as users construct identity and simultaneously interact with their social environment.

According to Talamo and Ligorio (2001, p. 110), the defining feature of cyberspace is the enhanced connectedness between people, made possible through the "mediated action" of online tools. These mediating tools present users with a vast range of "genres" for enacting participation (Ito et al., 2010). These increased contexts for participation also mean increased contexts for presenting the self.

Research highlights how the merging of offline and online selves creates a type of hybridised identity. Guzzetti's (2006, p. 158) case study examined how two young women, Sandra and Corgan, who identified with non-traditional "representations of gender", such as political activism, punk lifestyles, and a do-it-yourself (DIY) approach, used websites to perform their identities. Both participants had extended their offline interests into online domains by contributing to forums, and creating their own zines (online magazines). Findings demonstrated how website resources and postings were used as places to build and perform their identity and position themselves as key members of a community. For instance, they could connect with the current issues circulating in their respective interest groups, as well as demonstrate their own specific practices regarding DIY or punk identities. Further, their textual posts functioned as a means of performing their identities. In performing a strong and authentic punk identity, for example, Sandra "referred to herself as 'punk as fuck'" (p. 163).

Feedback from visitors to Sandra's zine and responses to her forum and website posts served to recognise and affirm genuine membership, and status

within the group as an expert. Sandra used others' comments about her posts to gauge judgements from peers about her performance, which she then reflected on as a means of learning about her own identity performance. Interacting online with other punk rock fans from around the world meant that Sandra could also position herself within a global community.

The case study findings also highlighted evidence of intertextual practices. For instance, Guzzetti (2006) described that while reading punk rock message boards, Sandra listened to punk rock music. Likewise, Sandra wrote about the same music she was listening to. Her visits to other bands' websites influenced the content of what she included in her own zine; equally, her online and offline writing was influenced by the writing styles of other websites. These multi-influenced and blended actions indicate that distinctions between online and offline activities and identities misses the interconnected relationships mediated across multiple contexts and the unique practices that occur.

Guzzetti (2006) suggests that through this array of activities, virtual and real performances have the opportunity to merge. This creates a "type of online / offline hybridity, or blending of her online and offline selves" (p. 164). Guzzetti highlights how Sandra's choice of punk rock self-presentation, which could be referred to as her 'stage life', created "an identity that could be recognized in virtual as well as actual performance" (p. 164). Consequently, all three forms of self-presentation, namely, 'stage life', 'virtual life', and 'actual life' were blended together through the websites. Subsequently, it was difficult to distinguish the boundaries of each identity form (Guzzetti).

Berki and Jäkälä (2010) go as far as to propose the dissolution of standard identity boundaries in online contexts. These authors suggest a taxonomy for identity management online, which integrates the reconfiguration of identifiers in varying ways. Anonymity, which is the absence of possessing a name and may extend to the absence of other identifiers, offers freedom from having to be associated with an identifier (Bowker and Tuffin, 2002, 2003). Nevertheless, it may be viewed unfavourably because anonymous users are also free from the responsibility and consequences for their actions. Hence, anonymity may threaten the capacity to trust in online interactions. Interestingly, the authors state that anonymity challenges the need to protect one's privacy because it renders private information redundant. On the other hand, anonymity may be a strategic resource for guarding private information in public spaces.

Pseudonymity is about identification under a false name and, equally, may extend to other false features. While pseudonymity has wide scope for corrupt

and misleading practices, it may serve an instrumental purpose (Berki and Jäkälä, 2010). Berki and Jäkälä identify situations where pseudonymity may play a practical role, such as when eponymity (identifying by name and other distinct features) requires too much disclosure for some. Similarly, the requirements for joining online communities may force some to take on a pseudonym. Pseudonymity allows complete choice over what personal details are revealed or altered. Further, as a person's actions become forever synonymous with whatever alias they provide, such details assume their own point of difference and may evolve into one's online eponym (Berki and Jäkälä). Such differences in usage indicate individual differences in perceptions of public and private spaces. Chawner's (2010) survey of librarians and information managers highlighted marked differences and tensions in the way professionals negotiate work-related and personal identities in blurred social networking contexts, where professional and personal boundaries may merge.

According to Berki and Jäkälä (2010), polynymity serves a practical means of self-management of identity expression across a range of personal, social and work-related encounters and protocols. For instance, academics may use eponyms in online distance teaching contexts with their students. In contrast, while engaging in discussion forums for social and personal use, they may adopt a pseudonym. They conclude by proposing that identity within online environments needs to be conceptualised as a "trust-based interaction" (p. 101).

With the blurring of social, personal and professional contexts through social media networks, and the reconstruction of traditional identity markers, including options for anonymity and pseudonymity, identities take on very different dimensions and evolving forms. With the digitisation of individuals' lives, Savin-Baden (2010, p. 35) proposes a taxonomy of "identities in flux" as an attempt to begin to represent the range of identity-related experiences by teaching staff in immersive virtual worlds. She includes Nakamura's (2000, para. 8) concept of "identity tourism" in which participants in role-playing games adopt a completely different ethnic identity, albeit a typically stereotyped version. Nakamura, however, cautions against the use of identity tourism because it evades the reality of living within minority identities and reduces cultural differences to stereotyped constructions. Savin-Baden, nevertheless, goes on to highlight the importance of online identities, including identity exploration, having an impact on individuals' identities in other contexts. Further, she questions whether identities performed in immersive virtual worlds and other online environments, for instance, may lead to

reformulations of one's identities in other spaces. These ideas indicate interesting possibilities around the fluid and dynamic influences of online environments for changing the way people perform and conceptualise identity.

In addition to the fluid and transformative dimensions of identity enhanced through online spaces for performance and reflection, there is also the issue of identity maintenance. To ensure identities are maintained, as Goffman (1959) points out, presenting oneself effectively relies on the ability to cater to specific audiences, and to maintain their separation. Chan's (2000) analysis of self-presentation strategies of homepage authors demonstrates how people actively engage in textual and image-based performances to manage competing interests and agendas. Participants' constructions of identity across different contexts highlighted real concerns over personal accountability for their actions as they needed to ensure audience separation to control socially acceptable forms of self-presentation for family and friends. This in turn signals how the constructions of identities involve real work in online spaces and are not simply relegated to playful acts of fantasy.

Interestingly, the mediated nature of online actions leads to the ability to see the self from multiple angles, that is, as the actor or participant of the action and as an audience member viewing the self from outside the screen (Thomas, 2000). This creates interesting intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. Thomas suggests a "duality of the self" (p. 670) in which one is simultaneously a viewer as well as the participant. Opportunities for self-reflection abound.

An important issue surrounding online constructions and performances of identity involves the extent to which such events are considered 'real'. Markham's (1998) ethnography of users' online experiences demonstrates how conceptualising online events as something less than real is not reflective of individuals' experiences. There is no distinction between encounters online and offline, rather all experiences, irrespective of location, are valid, lived experiences. Moreover, the particular ontological dimensions operating online help to reinforce this perspective. Removing the correspondence between representation and reality within the context of computer-mediated environments (Poster, 1997) and within the construction of digital information contests traditional meaning-making. Poster (1995) argues that uncertainty between the text and its referent undermines fixed notions of reality, as simulation, according to Vasseleu (1997), makes 'the real' redundant. This also leads to further potential for knowledge creation, as the medium itself encompasses the entire means of creating and communicating reality (c.f. McLuhan, 1987).

A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

To fully understand the fluid and dynamic constructions and performances of identities online, this chapter calls for textual forms of analysis, including discourse analysis, as another means of interpreting the nature of social events. Many online environments involve textual communication from email to various types of discussion forums. Further, it has been argued that online “the self is more embodied by the text than by the body” (Markham, 1998, p. 210). Consequently, it appears that textual mediums have the advantage over other mediums in not only representing but actively constructing experiences as they immediately unfold. (See Bowker and Tuffin, 2009, for a detailed discussion of the benefits of using discourse analysis to study behaviour in online settings.)

Traditionally, psychology has conceptualised language as a tool for gaining access to fundamental, intra-psychic properties, which govern outward physical actions. However, an alternative psychological approach, espoused here, views language as operating in far greater capacity. Any interpretation of an event or object is not only mediated by language, but is also constituted by language. With the constantly changing social landscapes online, discursive analyses recognise that meaning is also constantly moving and transforming.

Gavey (1989) highlights how events and objects in our social world are made sense of through the discourses we use to interpret them. Not only does language give us access to how individuals structure their social world, the medium of communication itself creates these social and psychological constructions governing how we operate. In other words, the way we understand human action and experience is inextricably linked to the ways in which our understandings are linguistically selected (Garfinkel, 1967; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Shotter and Gergen, 1989).

As Edwards and Potter (1992) argue, discursive psychology rejects the notion that language can neutrally reflect life. It challenges the idea that words objectively describe our existence and that such existence can be independent of our relationship with the social world. Language, through its very nature of being created by people in any given culture, to communicate shared meanings and social practices evolving from that culture, is caught up in the idiosyncrasies of that particular space. This challenges the notion that there can be absolute objectivity and truth. No knowledge is free from politics, power, or situated ideological values (Augoustinos, Tuffin, and Sale, 1999).

Hence, as Gavey (1989) indicates, positivism becomes one cultural standpoint amongst many that researchers can deploy to understand the social world.

The subjectivity of our social existence and experience is created in language. It is this subjectivity located in the intersubjective processes going on through social interaction that discursive psychology focuses on as the topic of human understanding (Burman and Parker, 1993). Subjectivity is not something that needs to be controlled, or eliminated from the research enterprise. What is (inter)subjective; what is differentially interpreted and negotiated in social interaction becomes the focus of study and analysis (Gavey, 1989). Similarly, the subjectivity of self-reflection made possible through public and private online spaces is consistent with this subjective interpretation of language.

Language, whether it is in the form of verbal or written communication, hieroglyphics, Sign, or Braille, is the nominative system of meaning within a social world. As Burman and Parker (1993), and Corker (1998) point out, meaning is never fixed. Instead, meaning constantly evolves and transforms according to the (inter)subjective activities going on within the social sphere.

CONCLUSION

To summarise, the textual nature of online communication lends itself to textual analysis as a means of understanding the important issues experienced by participants. With the dissolving of boundaries between representation and reality, the digitisation of lives offers another avenue for meaning-making. Subsequently, online experiences are simply another valid form of experience as textual communication constitutes embodied experience. Accessing how identities are constructed and experienced in online spaces is also made possible through textual forms of analysis.

Textual interpretations of online events may even bear new forms of theorising about identity. There are many forms of identity expression emerging online. Identity has become a fluid, dynamic and transformative occurrence, incorporating social, personal and work-related contexts. The blurring of public and private spaces, and the extended possibilities for identity management, including anonymity, pseudonymity and polynymity are opening up other ways of conceptualising identities, beyond traditional social psychological models.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, D. (1992). Processes of social identification. In G. Breakwell (Ed.), *Social psychology of identity and the self-concept* (pp. 57-99). London: Academic Press.
- Augoustinos, M., Tuffin, K., and Sale, L. (1999). Race talk. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 51(2), 1-8.
- Berki, E., and Jäkälä, M. (2010). Cyber-identities and social life in cyberspace. In S. Dasgupta (Ed.), *Social computing: Concepts, methodologies, tools, and applications: Vol. I* (pp. 92-104). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- Berman, J., and Bruckman, A. S. (2000). The Turing game: A participatory exploration of identity in online environments. In P. Day and D. Schuler (Eds.), *Proceedings of the directions and implications of advanced computing conference: Shaping the network society: The future of the public sphere in cyberspace* (research presentations, pp. 61-64). Seattle, WA: Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility.
- Bowker, N. (2008). Participating in the world (wide web): Social connections for people with disabilities. In S. Holland and F. Attwood (Eds.), *Remote relationships in a small world* (pp. 98-116). New York: Peter Lang.
- Bowker, N. I., and Tuffin, K. (2002). Disability discourses for online identities. *Disability and Society*, 17(3), 327-344.
- Bowker, N., and Tuffin, K. (2003). Dicing with deception: People with disabilities' strategies for maintaining safety and identity online. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 8(2). Retrieved December 10, 2011, from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol8/issue2/bowker.html>.
- Bowker, N., and Tuffin, K. (2009). Using the online medium for discursive research about people with disabilities. In N. Fielding (Ed.), *Interviewing II* (Vol. 1, pp. 255-271). London: Sage. (Reprinted from *Social Science Computer Review*, 22(2), 228-241).
- Brewer, M. B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17(5), 475-482.
- Brook, A. T., Garcia, J., and Fleming, M. (2008). The effects of multiple identities on psychological well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34(12), 1588-1600.
- Brown, R. (2000). Social identity theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30(6), 745-778.

- Bruckman, A. (1996, January). Finding one's own space in cyberspace. *Technology Review Magazine*, 48-54.
- Burman, E., and Parker, I. (Eds.). (1993). *Discourse analytic research: Repertoires and readings of texts in action*. London: Routledge.
- Cantwell, A. M., and Martiny, S. E. (2010). Bridging identities through identity change. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 73(4), 320-321.
- Chan, S. Y. M. (2000). Wired_selves: From artifact to performance. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 3(2), 271-285.
- Chandler, D. (1998). Personal home pages and the construction of identities on the web. *Paper presented at the conference of the Aberystwyth Post-International Group on linking theory and practice: Issues in the politics of identity*. University of Wales. Retrieved December 10, 2011, from <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/short/webident.html>.
- Chawner, B. (2010). *New technologies, new challenges: Building and managing online identities for professional (and personal) communication*. Research Colloquium, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta.
- Corker, M. (1998). Disability discourse in a postmodern world. In T. Shakespeare (Ed.), *The disability reader: Social sciences perspectives* (pp. 221-233). London: Cassell.
- Deaux, K. (1993). Reconstructing social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 19(1), 4-12.
- Deaux, K., and Burke, P. (2010). Bridging identities. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 73(4), 315-320.
- Deaux, K., Reid, A., Mizrahi, K., and Cotting, D. (1999). Connecting the person to the social: The functions of social identification. In T. Tyler, R. Kramer, and O. John (Eds.), *The psychology of the social self* (pp.91-113). New York: Erlbaum.
- Edwards, D., and Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive psychology*. London: Sage.
- Ethier, K. A., and Deaux, K. (1990). Hispanics in ivy: Assessing identity and perceived threat. *Sex Roles*, 22, 427-440.
- Ethier, K. A., and Deaux, K. (1994). Negotiating social identity when contexts change: Maintaining identification and responding to threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(2), 243-251.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Gavey, N. (1989). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 13, 459-475.

- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Guzzetti, B. J. (2006). Cybergirls: Negotiating social identities on cybersites. *E-Learning*, 3(2), 158-169.
- Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., Boyd, D., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., et al. (2010). *Hanging out, messing around and geeking out*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Markham, A. N. (1998). *Life online: Researching real experience in virtual space*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- McCaughey, M., and Ayers, M. D. (Eds.) (2003). *Cyberactivism: Online activism in theory and practice*. New York: Routledge.
- McLuhan, M. (1987). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. London: Ark Paperbacks.
- Nakamura, L. (1995). *Race in/for cyberspace: Identity tourism and racial passing on the Internet*. Retrieved December 10, 2011, from <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/mposter/syllabi/readings/nakamura.html>.
- Poster, M. (1995). Postmodern virtualities. In M. Featherstone and R. Burrows (Eds.), *Cyberspace / cyberbodies / cyberpunk: Cultures of technological embodiment* (pp. 79-95). London: Sage.
- Poster, M. (1997). Cyberdemocracy: The Internet and the public sphere. In D. Holmes (Ed.), *Virtual politics: Identity and community in cyberspace* (pp. 212 - 228). London: Sage.
- Potter, J., and Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. London: Sage.
- Sack, W. (2000). Navigating very large-scale conversations. In P. Day and D. Schuler (Eds.), *Proceedings of the directions and implications of advanced computing conference: Shaping the network society: The future of the public sphere in cyberspace* (research presentations, pp. 73-81). Seattle, WA: Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility.
- Savin-Baden, M. (2010). Changelings and shape shifters? Identity play and pedagogical positioning of staff in immersive virtual worlds. *London Review of Education*, 8(1), 25-38.
- Shotter, J., and Gergen, K. (Eds.). (1989). *Texts of identity*. London: Sage.
- Tajfel, H. (Ed.) (1978). *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H., and Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel and W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp.7-24). Chicago: Nelson Hall.

- Talamo, A., and Ligorio, B. (2001). Strategic identities in cyberspace. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 4(1), 109-122.
- Thomas, A. (2000). Textual constructions of children's online identities. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 3(4), 665-672.
- Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Turkle, S. (1996). Parallel lives: Working on identity in virtual space. In D. Grodin and T. R. Lindlof (Eds.), *Constructing the self in a mediated world* (pp. 156-175). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Turner, J. C. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Vasseleu, C. (1997). Virtual bodies / virtual worlds. In D. Holmes (Ed.), *Virtual politics: Identity and community in cyberspace* (pp. 46-58). London: Sage.
- Walker, K. (2000). "It's difficult to hide it": The presentation of self on Internet home pages. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23(1), 99-120.
- Yang, A. (2010). From "silent minority" to collective protests in real life: Tension, resistance and online identity discourse of overseas Chinese. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 22. Retrieved December 10, 2011, from <http://www.immi.se/jicc/>.