POSTCOLONIAL NOMADISM AND THE SIMULATED SELF IN IMAGES OF FRAGMENTED IDENTITY

by

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SUMMARY

Since the onset of postcolonialism in South Africa, cultural diversity was brought on by the political decline of cultural borders, mass-media infiltration, technological advancement and the disposition of postmodernism's assemblage of eclectic characteristics. Within postmodern postcolonialism, cultural conditions such as diaspora, nomadism and cosmopolitanism contributed to a sense of global citizenship.

As such, postcolonialism and its cultural fusion promoted a new multi-cultural, hybrid culture. In this mini-dissertation it is argued that identity is a reflection or a simulation of the social surroundings in which one exists. Just as the individual's identity becomes a product of his/her surroundings, elements of the individual's identity manifest within cultural spaces. Within this simulation in a hybrid and multi-cultural space, personal identity becomes a fragmented and splintered concept, which is a subconscious reaction to the diversities in the individual's cultural surroundings; moreover, the diversity in culture also contributes to constructing a more adaptable identity from these fragments. A growing feeling of *Ubuntu* or tolerance for differences and oppositions that develops in multi-cultural space contributes to the argument that cultural spaces become diverse and hybrid in a postmodern eclectic era.

To overcome the fragmentation in identity, the postcolonial individual unintentionally formulates a hybrid, or fusion in identity by relating to different aspects that one finds in one's surroundings. Identity becomes a fluid concept and is ever-changing to adapt to the multiplicities of contemporary postcolonial culture. This fluidity in identity is sub-consciously achieved by adopting psychological thought processes like Nomadism and Proteanism. The process of formulation of a new eclectic and fluid identity becomes more important than the identity in itself. Therefore, the ability to have a fluid and adaptable identity becomes more important than exclusivity in one's identity.

The establishment of this fluidity in identity is not a conscious decision, but merely an autonomic process of metamorphosis that enables the postcolonial individual to maintain identity, even though his/her identity cannot be fixed.

KEY TERMS

Assemblage: A collection of things (theories, styles) that have been assembled to form a new hybrid in theory or style.

Contemporary: Refers to the characteristics and trends of the present time frame.

Cosmopolitanism: The inclusion of people from different cultures, countries and influences into a unified cultural structure by implementing a model that overcomes cultural borders.

Diaspora: The movement of people over cultural and national borders in search of better cultural and sociological environments. Diaspora is usually induced by nomadic movement.

Eclectic: An adjective that points to not following one unified style or set of ideas, but choosing and combining from a wide variety.

Fluidity: Situations and thoughts that are likely to change and transform because they are not fixed.

Fragmentation: The idea that an entity can consist of diverse pieces that can be combined to reflect an idea as a whole.

Globalism: The inclusion of everything (and everyone) around the world by not restricting communication, trade and culture to national or cultural borders. Globalism developed with the spread of information and knowledge, that was brought forward by the decline of cultural borders.

Hybrid: The product of combining two or more different aspects together in order to form a new entity.

Multi-cultural: With reference to the hybrid cultures that occur in postcolonial culture, multi-culturalism points to the acceptance of the integration of different cultures, but does not deny cultural borders in such a society.

Nomadic: A lifestyle of moving with one's essential belongings from one place to another to acquire natural resources for survival. It also points to a frame of mind where opinions and actions are adapted according to external forces.

Postcolonial: Postcolonialism consists of a number of theories that investigate identity (including racial, sexual, cultural, national and demographic identity) with reference to the decline of colonialism that influenced cultural integration.

Postmodern: A style or movement of the late twentieth century encompassing art, architecture, literature, philosophy, that reacted in opposition to Modernism, for example by mixing features from traditional and modern styles. Postmodern theory and styles are often eclectic and consist of an assemblage of different theories and styles.

Proteanism: As formulated by Robert Lifton, Proteanism is a psychological adaptive model that allows the 'self' to transform in order to adapt to the diverse cultural demands of postmodernism.

Quasi-presence: A simulated presence; the manifestation of something that looks familiar in an unconventional manner.

Simulation: An artificial copy, imitation or reproduction of reality.

Ubuntu: Ubuntu is an ethic and humanistic philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with each other. It also speaks to our interconnectedness and the responsibility to each other that flows from this interconnectedness.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Many countries are currently experiencing a decline of cultural borders, which impacts on socio-political, cultural, philosophical and environmental conditions in societies. In this study, postcolonial visual texts depicting the self as essentially nomadic and constantly adapting to the effects of such conditions are investigated.   The idea that technological advancement and increased media availability have contributed to the growing infiltrations of cultures is considered and the influence of diasporic activity and globalism on the postcolonial individual and his/her personal identity is traced.

In many contemporary visual depictions of the contemporary and postcolonial identity, the self is shown as a metaphor for the process of constructing and establishing identity in a diverse, globalising and nomadic world. In this study, the postmodern self as a nomadic concept is theoretically understood as related to cultural trends and investigated through the ideas of diaspora, multi-culturalism, globalism and cosmopolitanism. Psychoanalytical models of the self are explored through Proteanism, theories on multiplicities and fragmentation of the self. Although conventional self-portraits, or visual representations of the self manifest as reminiscent reproductions or representations of certain recognisable features of the self, they also reveal appearance and aspects of identity and cultural surroundings.

This investigation aims to show how the decline of cultural borders is increasingly evident in contemporary visual texts, and to uncover the problematic aspects that coincide with the decline of cultural borders and postulates how this cultural confusion may be unpacked.

1.1.   Background and aims of study

Against a rich history of colonialism and the decline thereof, current South African culture is entrenched in postcolonialism with prevailing awareness of differences in culture and a constant cross-reference and cross-influence between cultures. The aim of this study is to investigate the presence of diversity in culture and postcolonial aspects such as diaspora, multi-culturalism, globalism and cosmopolitanism in the South African

socio-cultural context and visual texts. Supplementary to the exploration of identity as nomadic and fluid, the study investigates the role that fragmentation and simulation plays in the formulation of a postmodern identity. It is maintained that, within this context, the self is simulated and constructed as a reaction and adaptation to these diverse cultural influences. It will be argued furthermore that fragmentation in identity does not necessarily mean that it becomes incongruous and split, but that it could allow a new subconscious formation of solidarity within a fragmented identity.

As identity is modelled onto certain cultural influences, it becomes diverse and fragmented due to the diversity in present day culture. In the postcolonial present-day South African culture there are ongoing infiltrations of other cultures such as West-African, Western influences and influences from the Far East, all of which are brought about by the decline of identity boundaries and cultural borders. This decline and interaction of different cultures within South African society, is caused by diaspora and interaction between different cultures in one society.

The study conforms to the assumption that identity is ever-changing and cannot be fixed. The theoretical component of this study is applied to visual culture and postcolonial visual texts that support the investigation into theories such as multi-dimensionality and diaspora that convey fluidity in culture and identity in order to support the premise of this study. In addition, my own artworks will be interpreted in order to demonstrate how aspects such as fragmentation and simulation that originated from reflection of the self and the conveyance of multi-dimensional facets of the self, form part of the depiction of the nomadic self. Most of the fragmentation and simulation in my own work is achieved through technological processes in the production thereof. All the visual texts that will be explored entail manifestations of the self in the form of self-portraits or a portrayal of a reflective aspect of the self.

1.2.   Theoretical framework and literature review

In order to support fluidity in identity of the fragmented postmodern self, the aspects of nomadism, postcolonialism, multi-culturalism, cosmopolitanism and the simulacrum of the self are incorporated into the theoretical framework of this study.

Nomadism

In the establishment of a connection between nomadic identity and the postmodern self, Rosi Braidotti's contribution towards the exploration of nomadism is of great significance to this study. She shows that substantial awareness is characteristic of nomadic identity (2002:32) and argues that it forms part of postmodern culture and that the formation of identity in such a culture is a fluid and ongoing process (2006:22). Braidotti (1994:64) stipulates the formulation of nomadism as a critical consciousness and it is explained and applied to the process of establishing identity. Although Braidotti's writings are grounded in feminism, they contribute to the application of nomadic theory to culture, knowledge and power systems, and moreover, the development of postmodern identity. As determining theorist, Braidotti's (2006:147) argument, that nomadic identity shows processes of becoming in terms of subjectivity will be referred to throughout this study and supplemented with like views of other theorists referred to in this study.

In addition to Braidotti's (2002:78) postulations that includes the argument that nomadic theory is postmodern in the way that it can adapt and move from one frame of mind to another, Carol Becker[1] (2002:57), argues that the 'reconstruction of collective memory' as developed in the era of globalisation, complements nomadic thought. She argues that acceptance of a change of mind is not permanent; because one's opinions may change again as a natural process in gradual adaption to cultural forces (Becker 2002:59). As part of nomadic thought, the transportation of the self (from the real into the virtual and vice versa) formulated by Braidotti are explored.

Becker (2002:94) writes about the interrelatedness between nomadic thought and concepts like globalisation and transnationalism by referring to her journey from Atlanta to South Africa for the second Johannesburg Biennale. Within this context, she differentiates between two kinds of nomads: firstly the nomadic elite who travel at will; and secondly the disenfranchised poor who travel out of desperation to improve their living conditions (Becker 2002:122).

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[1] Carol Becker is Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Saskia Sassen[2] (2007:12), describes nomadism as a means to overcome contemporary translocal mediated forms of interaction as nomadism is a metamorphic process of adapting ones identity.

Postmodernism, postcolonialism and diaspora

To further the discussion that the formulation of identity is a process, postcolonial theory will be applied as a secondary focus in this minor dissertation. Postcolonialism, as a set of theories, deals with aspects of culture after the legacy of colonial rule. Hugh Mackay[3] (2000:49) argues that these cultural aspects include national, racial, gender, ethnic and political identity; and originate from the dilemma of creating a unique cultural identity after colonial rule and becomes more evident in the postmodern discourse. Simon During (1995:41) argues that the primary rationale for Postcolonialism and postmodernism overlaps; both these theories constitute the idea that the *other* must be acknowledged and that the *other* can speak for itself as an *other*.

Couze Venn[4] (2006:9-14) provides an objective overview of postcolonial writings and theories. In addition to his objective overview, the source contains specific reference to how postcolonialism can be identified and applied in a postmodern society. Venn (2006:33), argues that postmodernism's presence is inevitable due to the increasing presence of cultural fusion. Respectively, Homi K Bhabha (1995:42) reasons that we have to rethink our perspectives on identity and cultural identity in a postcolonial era due to the homogenising threat that postcolonial aspect like diaspora and the decline of cultural borders have on present-day culture.

Cosmopolitanism

Stephanie Street (2001:2) argues that boundaries between states, cultures and societies become irrelevant when considering cosmopolitanism because all different societies, cultures and states are included in the one final capsule of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism's relevance to this study lies in the concept of globalised decline of separate communities and the promotion of one homogenised society.

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[2] Saskia Sassen is the Ralph Lewis professor of sociology at the University of Chicago.
[3] Dr Hugh Mackay is the senior lecturer in Sociology at the Faculty of Social Science at Britain's Open University.
[4] Couze Venn is the Cultural Studies Professor at Nottingham Trent University.

To Ulrich Beck (2004:2), cosmopolitanism allows the view that the individual forms part of a community that, in its turn, forms part of a larger society, which forms part of the next level of social structures, therefore the idea that all of humanity belong to a single community based on a shared morality. This is furthered by Ulirch Beck's (2004:12) argument that cosmopolitanism enables an individual to feel at home with diversities that is brought forward by the emergence of 'transnational networks like global cities and postnational social formations' that was created by migrant and diasporic flows.

Both these views are in direct opposition of the (colonial) traditional nation-state view on transnational and cultural identity. Beck (2004:18) also believes that cosmopolitanism is a social science which acknowledges the *otherness* in a globalised society in terms of different cultures, natures and nationalities. With this in mind, cosmopolitanism can be seen as a means of overcoming boundaries that trigger neonational reflex (Beck 2004:19) and therefore marks a contradiction between methodological nationalism and the new real cosmopolitanisation (Beck 2004:18).

In the establishment of the new real cosmopolitanism Pnina Werbner (2008:19-22) provided useful insights to this study as it investigates the vernacular aspects of a global vision for cosmopolitanism.

Psychoanalytic theories

This study investigates psychoanalytical theories such as the multiplicity of the self in Jacques Lacan's (1949:33) theory on the mirror stage and Robert Lifton's (1993:9) formulation of the Protean model of the self. These theories show how individuals adapt to the changing and evolving forces of culture and look into aspects such as identity fragmentation, multi-layered identities and fluidity in identity. The following specific ideas are investigated:

- *Mirror stage*

  Jacques Lacan (2001:18) explains the infant's first interaction with its reflection in the mirror to be the first step in the development of a self-concept. In addition to this, he argues that this subjective realisation is the first step in the

development of ego, which in its turn, develops personal identity through personal identification.

- *Proteanism*

Robert Jay Lifton[5] (1993:37) provides insight into how the postmodern individual adapts it's personal existence and current identity to the cultural fusion that surrounds an individual.

Simulacrum

Jean Baudrillard[6] (1981:56) postulates the theory of the simulacrum as a simulation that has lost its referent. The newly formed simulation as such becomes as authentic as the original. This theory forms part of the discussion of reflections between the self and its environment. In addition to Baudrillard, Pierre Lévy[7] (1998:62) writes about simulations as virtual reality and the limitations of virtual reality. Lévy (1998:64) investigates the relationship between the virtual and the real and the authenticity of both which provided valuable insight in the discussion about simulations in this study.

Since this study focuses on the cultural, sociological, philosophical and psychoanalytical aspects of the nomadic self, the study aims to demonstrate that most of these concepts are predisposed by the idea that technology has become a major influence on an individual's behaviour today (Mackay 2000:48). Therefore, whilst not ignoring the technological influences on an individual's cultural behaviour, identities are also explored within the context of the theory on virtuality. Pierre Lévy (1998:19-42) and Jean Baudrillard's (1996:189-287) views on simulation and the difference between the virtual and the real are valuable to this element of the argument in this study.

Both Baudrillard (1996:212) and Lévy (1998:39) acknowledge an individual's quasi-presence in a virtual environment and this aspect is explained by referring to examples where an individual's reflection is acknowledged as his virtual self. When an individual

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[5] Lifton, the father of Proteanism, is a Professor of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School and is concerned with identity and culture in postmodernism.

[6] Jean Baudrillard is a French theorist of postmodernity, sociologist, cultural critic and philosopher and was a Professor of Philosophy of Culture and Media Criticism at the European Graduate School.

[7] Pierre Lévy is a French-born theorist who is Professor in the Department of Communications at the University of Ottowa, w

looks into a mirror, the real self transports itself to the quasi-presence of the virtual reflection of the self. The self then exists as a real self as well as a virtual self.

Scott Durham[8] (1998:26) investigates the influence that the simulacrum has in the formation of postmodern culture and the influence that technology has on culture; Durham argues that culture is simulated and fragmented and this sources supplements the discussion about fragmentation in culture that transpires into fragmentation in one's personal identity, but it does not show this fragmentation as a threat on thriving personal identity.

1.3.   Methodology

The critical investigation into the theories prominent to this study is conducted by analysing data from relevant sources, comparing different theorists' views, and relating these to the artworks investigated. In this interdisciplinary study, disciplines such as politics, psychology, social theory and philosophy supplemented the investigation into decoding and understanding the primary discipline to this study. As these disciplines are all interrelated, the survey of the data includes content analysis and content comparison of the disciplines themselves and how these disciplines supplement each other.

The arguments and conclusions drawn from this study were used as a conceptual basis for creating artworks that form part of this study. The selection of sources and the visual texts used for referencing purposes were selected to support the formulation of the premise and the formulation of this study's argument. Visual texts were selected on the basis that they show manifestations of the self that support the conceptual basis inherent to this study.

1.4. Overview of chapters

Introductory to this study, Chapter one provides a brief description of the background to the study, the premise and a theoretical and methodological framework and a review of what will follow in the next chapters. This allows the reader to gain an understanding of, not only what will be discussed in the following chapters, but this chapter also

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[8]Scott Durham is assistant Professor of French at the Northwestern University.

explains the process of the argument and how the argument is resolved into the conclusion of this study.

In Chapter 2, *Postcolonial identity,* aspects of postmodern culture are explored to show how the nomadic self is formulated and how it functions in such contexts. The relationship of multi-culturalism to postcolonialism and postmodern identity is investigated in this chapter and aspects of postcolonialism are explored in order to illustrate cultural displacement of the postcolonial individual and the fluidity in identity in multi-cultural societies. Nomadism and fluidity in identity is further explored in psychoanalytical theories of the self and the application thereof to the interdisciplinary discussion in this study.

The investigation in Chapter 3, *Nomadic manifestation of the postcolonial self,* focuses on ways in which the postmodern self and simulations thereof manifest visually and how these manifestations relate to nomadic identity. Although some visual texts in this chapter include reflection of the self via mirrors, abstract reflections of the self are also explored. Within this chapter, the dispute that reflections of the self point not only to the virtual image as a reproduction and/or simulation of the self, but also to a materialisation of abstract aspects of an individual is investigated.

The conclusion includes a summary of the main discussions and how the arguments and conclusions formulated from these discussions were achieved. As part of the conclusion the contributions and limitations of the study are highlighted and recommendations for further research are made.

CHAPTER TWO: POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY

The South African cultural context is characterised by ongoing political and social decline of cultural boundaries, which in turn, promotes the fusion of cultures with "new" cultural characteristics. Similarly, South African art has become increasingly diverse in style and theme since the late 1970s to accommodate the cultural diversity of the community. South African artists are expanding their themes and thereby portraying the change inherent to our culture and art to be appreciated by a foreign, and more, global audience.

This chapter investigates postcolonial identity and the postmodern condition of adaptation to diverse external forces in culture such as globalisation, nomadism, cosmopolitan and diasporic activities. It is argued that the modern-day development of hybrid cultural patterns within South Africa has its origin in the decline of colonialism leading to a culturally diverse postcolonial environment.

2.1 Postcolonial societies

Since the early 1980s, art became a strong medium for social comment in South Africa because it became a platform for a dialogue between the viewer and the artist on a social and political level. Both the Tributaries exhibition and the Cape Town Triennial that took place in 1985 showed South African artists emerging into the global platform of contemporary art (King 1991:2). South African art did not only become a global commodity after these significant exhibitions, but also gained propagandistic power as these exhibitions were covered extensively in the media and received substantial corporate funding (King 1991:4). Due to the increasing international coverage and participation of these exhibitions, South African art became a global commodity that not only showed cultural borders, but crossed these cultural and social borders by becoming accessible to all viewers and was produced by artists from different backgrounds. The notion that there was no cultural separation in the visual dialogue promoted the development of multi-culturalism and a global culture as a discourse on South African art.

Slemon (2001:104) views "postcolonialism" as a *portmanteau* word, an "umbrella thrown up over many heads and against a great deal of rain" (Slemon 2001:104) or a collective name for different theories present in cultural theory after colonialism. Venn (2006:7)

identifies aspects that contributed to the postcolonial assemblage as occidentalism, genealogy, diaspora, creolisation, globalisation and cosmopolitanism. According to Slemon (2001:104), the first period (or process) involved in postcolonialism, is the idea that every concept is a result of a previous decline of cultural borders. To Slemon (2001:104), the origin of the confusion lies in the radical change in cultural structures and the cultural state before the change is only a temporal state of culture. Furthermore, Slemon (2001:104) postulates postcolonial discussions include a geo-political concept of contemporary group identity. Spivak (1995:27) argues that the subaltern's voice is not only dominated by the dominating culture's voice, but after breaking free from colonial rule, the subaltern adapted its own voice to correlate with the oppressor's voice. Bhabba (1995:31) supports Spivak's (1995:27) argument that the subaltern's voice is influenced by the oppressor's voice, but Bhabba (1995:31) adds to this that the subaltern also influences the oppressor's voice.

In conjunction with Slemon, Robotham (2000:87) identifies two periods of postcolonialism. The first period is an era of de-colonialisation; the second period is called postcolonial proper. The first period deals with the erasure of colonial rule. In Robotham's second period, which relates to a combination of Slemon's second and third periods, the construction of a new identity and society takes place. For the purposes of this study the focus is on the theories of postcolonial "proper". In postcolonial proper, issues like differentiation in culture, ethnic confusion and integration of nationalism becomes apparent (Bhabha 1995:29-30).

For During (1995:125), postcolonial identity is rooted in language. He refers to the postcolonial individual who often adopted the language of the imperial (During 1995:125). Young (2001:57) agrees with the principle that postcolonial identity is rooted in language, but acknowledges the idea that all postcolonial identities are not constructed due to an earlier colonial rule. Young (2001:57) refers to the reality that people from different nations are emerging into a new context of economic and sometimes political domination to experience a new sovereignty.

For Young (2001:64), the crux of postcolonialism is a lack of unity – whether in language, cultures, ethnicity or nationalism. During (1995:127) argues that it is in this lack of unity that postcolonial theory and postmodernist theory are similar to each other

because both discourses are eclectic in theory. The lack of unity in separate cultures and racial identities allows a new development of cultural structures because it encourages the development of a global identity. As the distinct margins between cultures, languages, nationalities and racial identities become blurred in a postcolonial society, the only boundary that is still intact is the border of the outside of a global culture. This blurred border creates a space in which all nationalities, racial identities, cultural fusions, nation-state identities and sexual identities exist and this forms an environment in which an individual exists as a global self.

Postcolonialism does not only suggest a period after colonialism, but it also refers to the cultural legacy of colonial rule (Robotham 2000:86). In its acknowledgement of colonial rule, postcolonialism also refers to the decline of the colonial rule and the de-colonialisation process that followed (Einsberg 2000:395). It deals with cultural identity in colonised societies and the dilemmas of developing a national identity after the colonial rule (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 213). At first, the way in which postcolonialism deals with aspects of colonial rule might be confusing, but the following explanation by Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1995:2) assist in clarifying this:

> The term 'postcolonial' is resonant with all the ambiguity and complexity of the many different cultural experiences it implicates, and it addresses all aspects of the colonial process from the beginning of colonial contact. Postcolonial critics and theorists should consider the full implications of restricting the meaning of the term to 'after-colonialism' or after-independence.

Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1995:3) are of the opinion that the term 'postcolonial' is used to represent the continuing process of imperial suppressions and exchanges throughout the diverse range of societies that manifest due to cultural infiltration. An essential claim of postcolonial theory is that, despite a shared experience of colonialism, the cultural realities of postcolonial societies may differ (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995:55). By acknowledging this diversity or fragmentation in postcolonial theory, Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1995:55) refers to universalism as a postcolonial aspect due to its ongoing intention of establishing a homogeneous and ambiguous human nature that denies differences in society.

In addition to the ambiguity, diversity and fragmentation in postcolonial theory identified by Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1995:3) as mentioned above, other theorists, including Slemon (2001:104) and Venn (2006:3-4), believe that postcolonialism is a collective term for aspects that contribute to a new formation of multi-cultural identity in a postmodern world.

Because postmodern theorists such as Slemon (2001:99) and Robotham (2000:87) view the nationalist search for home and authenticity as modernist, they argue that the decline of modernism automatically produced a global community (Bhabha *et al* 2000:578). In addition to this, Browning, Halcli & Webster (2000:5) believe that the development of a postmodern global culture is an extension of postcolonialism due to the strong reference to de-colonisation in present-day culture. Robotham (2000:87) sees the presence of postcolonialism in the world today as a response to the disturbed notions of identity that have become known in present-day culture. With this reference to postcolonialism in culture comes the confusion about identity of postmodern citizens that was, according you Robotham (2000:87), dealt with in earlier postcolonialism. Browning, Halcli & Webster (2000:5) argue that:

> The large scale migration of people, communication of information and images, and the rapid movement of materials around the globe have combined to bring into question relatively fixed notions of culture, to introduce doubts about cultural heritage and identity, and to raise unsettling questions about how best to think about culture.

In answering some of these questions, Bhabha *et al* (2000:582) argue that the postcolonial individual, as a global citizen[1], should not forget his/her cultural heritage. Moreover, the cultural citizen should acknowledge his/her original nation-state identity in the opportunities to formulate a new global identity. However, in his article entitled 'Nationalism', Murray Low (2000:367) suggests that nationalism is becoming obsolete as a result of globalisation.

Therefore, the combination of cultural diversity in globalism and the homogeneity of separate cultures that developed in the decline of pure nationalism, promotes the development of a multi-cultural society.

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[1] A more elaborate discussion on globalism will follow later in this section, but due to aspects of postcolonialism like Diaspora and cultural integration, the concept of the global citizen is referred to here.

2.2　Multi-cultural hybridity in a global society

Multi-culturalism does not only advocate a new hybrid culture influenced by cultural pluralism[2], but is also a means by which postwar policies contributing towards cultural minorities are re-evaluated (Einberg 2000:397). The minority cultures have gained equal weight to exist as a culture with traditions and structures, but the fusion of minority cultures with majority cultures and vice versa cannot be ignored. Therefore, multi-culturalism re-negotiates the terms on which cultures integrate. According to Einsberg (2000:397), 'most arguments for multi-culturalism and the recognition of difference aim to improve, not undermine, social cohesion by providing minority groups with the cultural security they require in order to integrate successfully into the societies of which they are a part.'

Bhabha (1995:34) argues that a sense of hybridity becomes known in ethnic and cultural integration. Bhabha (1995:34) questions ethnicity, in the sense that, after colonial rule individuals become confused about which members of a society are ethnic to that society and which are not. Mackay (2000:48) refers to the 'assemblage of cultures' that originates from a growing infiltration of separate cultures on one another, the origin of which is rooted in the history of colonialism and the decline thereof. Jamal (2005:69) believes that South Africans accepted and embraced cultural differences from the early 1980s, but also argues that this acceptance was a theoretical one. To Jamal (2005:71) total acceptance of the decline of the cultural borders in South Africa that has been so clearly defined in the Apartheid regime is lacking in contemporary South African culture due to the constant reminder of the struggle to achieve this decline. Although South African culture developed into a postcolonial multi-layered culture, there is constant reference made to the previously suppressing cultures and the previously oppressing cultures. Jamal's argument does not stipulate the absence of cultural infiltration in South Africa, but merely acknowledges the limitations in cultural infiltration when there is a radical decline in the borders between cultural groups.

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[2] As discussed earlier in this section, this new hybrid and homogenic culture is the culture found in society after (or even during) globalisation. In postcolonial societies, hybridity in culture is also present due to the acknowledgement that dominant and subaltern cultures both exist.

In reference to Slemon (2001:104) diaspora, or the mass movement of people from one county to another, promotes the infiltration of cultures into one another, as distinct cultures become forcibly fused in situations where different cultures are forced to exist in one society. The fusion of culture and the blurring of national and cultural borders can be seen in fusion of cultures due to the combination of mass media infiltration and diaspora as people, information and commodities are transported across borders. Cultural fusion can promote the idea of globalism that advocates a global culture and the idea that we are all part of one fused culture instead of the colonial, nation-state identity.

This study aims to investigate the simultaneously homogenic and fragmented identity of the postcolonial individual, whether it is personal identity or cultural identity, and how these diverse identities exist in one cultural space. Although aspects which promotes postcolonialism and the decline of cultural borders in a postmodern era will be discussed, the focus in this study lies in the overcoming of a splintered identity and the creation of a newfound fluid identity. This newfound fluid identity allows the individual to retain some aspects of personal and cultural identity, but to simultaneously adapt to the diversity of postcolonial spaces.

The South African context is characterised by ongoing political and social decline of cultural boundaries, which in turn, promotes the fusion of cultures with "new" cultural characteristics. Similarly, South African art has become increasingly diverse in style and theme since the late 1970s. According to Williamson (1996:11) South African artists are expanding their themes and thereby portraying the change inherent to our culture and art to be appreciated by a foreign, and more so, global audience.

The primary aspect of present-day society is that it is simultaneously fragmented and simulated. The splintering of cultures is a result of the global diversity thereof that occurs due to the infiltration of cultural borders by media and logy explain how exactly. Durham (1998:15) considers the influence of media and logy and argues it to be the primary reason why simulation exists in culture. This argument adds a specific contribution to the debate.

Virtual communities in cyberspace can be seen as a simulation or a recreation of societies due to the systematic construction of interaction by individuals and groups. However,

Katherine Hayles (1996:19) argues that simulation is more prominent in culture than is acknowledged by cultural individuals. The presence of simulation in culture can be seen in the repetitive nature of human behaviour – in the interaction between groups and cultural structures as individuals simulate their behaviour on what they have previously experienced or witnesses (Hayles 1996:20).

Cultural simulation is also present in the behaviour of children as their behaviour is based on the behaviour of their elders – that which children repeatedly see happening in their surroundings may influence or predict their own behaviour. The manifestation of simulation in culture can be observed in the formulation of cultural trends as these are developed from influences from either another culture or from previous cultural activities. Just as in children's behaviour that is influenced by the behaviour of individuals in their surroundings, cultural structures and traditions are practised as a simulation of known activities and existing traditions. Mackay (2000:47) believes that cultural simulations' ultimate goal is to do away with distinctions between cultural differences. He (Mackay 2000:47) argues that the result would be a homogenised culture in which every individual have a non-disclosed identity of adaptability and change, but simultaneously accepting differences to promote the similarity between individuals.

The growing infiltration of cultures on one another provides present-day culture with the blurring of definite cultural borders that, according to Mackay (2000:48), contributes to the blurring of cultural borders and allows the development of globalisation in present-day culture that is no longer rooted in nationalistic traditions (Browning, Halcli & Webster 2000:5).

Figure 1: Zanele Muholi, Amanda 'China' Nyandeni (Johannesburg) (2007).
Lambda Print, 605mm x 865mm.
Collection: Unknown
(Stevenson, Perryer & Bostland 2007:68)

Zanele Muholi's *Amanda 'China' Nyandeni (Johannesburg)* (2007) (Figure 1) portrays an individual's fused identity originating from a multi-cultural society and providing multiple visual "cultural clues" about the subject's cultural origin. The "cultural clues" in this work include the distinctive Burberry scarf (which originated in the United Kingdom), Asian facial features and a South African reference as the title of this indicates. To add to the reference of multi-culturalism, the title of this work includes the subject's name and nickname which refers to more than one language and cultural identity. This work forms part of the *Faces and Phases* series that shows the unravelling of stereotypical assumptions about dress, gender and nationality (Stevenson, Perryer & Bostland 2007:64).

By including the Burberry scarf in the picture plane, Muholi plays with the idea of heritage and the fusion of both the concepts of nationality and cultural identity. The

black, camel, and red pattern on a Burberry scarf, known as 'haymarket check' or the 'Burberry classic check' was first used as a lining for the Burberry trench coat in 1924 (Burberry sl:sn). Even before that, the UK War Office commissioned Burberry to design a coat worn by UK Soldiers. This coat was the first to have the 'haymarket check' as lining. The 'haymarket check' is now a registereed trademark (Burberry sl:sn).

Whereas backgrounds in conventional portraits often shows elements of identity or heritage, *Amanda 'China' Nyandeni (Johannesburg)* (2007) (Figure 1) shows a neutral background. The emptiness showed in the background contributes to the ambiguity and heterogeneity of the subject's cultural identity – the picture could be taken in any cultural environment. In addition to the absence of cultural elements in the background, the portrait does not state a definite chronological era in which the subject existed. The neutral visual aspects in this portrait contribute the intention of the artist to convey a fused identity.

Figure 2: Burberry Check.
Released to press in 1999
(Burberry [O])

Perryer (2008:64) refers to Muholi's aim to capture subtle complexities that challenge our prejudices to show how similar we are. Although Maholi's works primarily portray black lesbians in South Africa (Stevenson, Perryer & Bostland 2007: 64), two of her recent series of work, *Faces and Phases* (2007) and *Siyafana* (2008), shows how individuals in present-day culture portray a postcolonial identity that was inclined by having global influence at hand. The title of the *Siyafana* Series (2008), a sequel to *Faces and Phases*

(Series) (2008), means that we are the same and it also considers similarities and differences within one race (Perryer 2008:64).

Berni Searle questions the presence of definite cultural borders and comments on an integrated cultural identity (Bester 2004:13). In her *Colour Me* series (1998) (Figure 3) the fusion of cultures becomes evident. This series consist of a number of colour photographs that show the artist covered in spices. By superimposing spices that have a cultural connotation onto the self, this series comments on cultural traditions and how these traditions are adapted to cultural fusion.

In most of Searle's work the reference to the postcolonial identity can refer to the formulation of different aspects of identity, such as racial, nation-state, demographic, sexual, cultural (and linguistic) identity and more. All these aspects that contributed to the postcolonial assemblage, as identified by Venn (2006:7), refer to the postmodern and postcolonial individual that has a nomadic subjectivity in identity, as the individual is in the process of obtaining. This process is strengthened by the presence of movement and migration in these aspects of postcolonialism. Although these aspects of the assemblage constitute a postcolonial and postmodern critique, which originated in the rapidly changing world in which the individual lives (Slemon 2001:101).

Searle explores the combination of the self (which, in this case, is from a mixed racial heritage) with spices that have a strong connotation to specific cultures. She almost buries herself and the reminiscence of her cultural and racial heritage in another culture's spice to show the formulation of a combined cultural identity in progress. As part of most cultural behaviour, cooking methods and traditions are often deeply rooted in cultures. In this series of photographs, the Malay cooking tradition of using rich and colourful spices like turmeric and paprika was optimised in an investigation into cultural roots and identity. This series of photographs aims to blur the definite borders between these cultures and racial identities by featuring the self caked in rich and colourful spices. In so doing, the cooking traditions of different cultures and conflicting backgrounds are blurred. Searle (in Perryer 2004:3) comments that the ideological presence of one culture can be erased as the fusion of cultures promotes a multi-cultural society where the more popular cultural trends thrive. The fusion into multi-culturalism is not the product of an aggressive force, but has evolved due to the growing interest in other cultures.

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Figure 3: Berni Searle, Untitled #1-4 from *Colour Me* series (1998).
Hand printed colour photograph, 420 x 500 mm.
Collection: Private.
(Perryer 2004:27)

In addition to conveying the blurring of cultural borders through combining aspects of different cultures in one picture plane, the artist shows that a new, hybrid culture is established by the presence of different cultures. Hybridity does not only become apparent in the identity of an individual, but also manifests in societal spaces such as schools, community centres, living arrangements and in the political realm of a country like South Africa. In addition to the cultural comments inherent to this work, the artist also represents the self as a changing body that is in the process of metamorphosis. In this instance, the metamorphosis is reversible and the body is shown to accept the temporary change. This aspect connects Searle's work with nomadic subjectivity as the body is shown in transition between racial identities.

In a South African context, individuals became increasingly aware of the presence of the new sovereignty and that the only way to adapt to the new sovereignty was to embrace it (Jamal 2005:67). In this new sovereignty, an individual experiences definite differences between him/herself and the new location towards the rise and construction of globalism. Such embracing of the sovereignty in postcolonial identity was illustrated by both Muholi's *Amanda 'China' Nyandeni (Johannesburg)* and Berni Searle's *Colour Me* series. It can be contended that it is in the postcolonial individual's own formation of identity that a level of coherence is found (Slemon 2001:102). Although the postcolonial individual's coherence in identity is subjective, the present-day cultural surroundings accept unique and fused identities more openly than decades earlier, as seen in Muholi's *Amanda 'China' Nyandeni (Johannesburg)*. Similarly, Searle's *Colour Me* series investigates the idea that, although society has become diverse, a level of cultural unity exists between individuals from similar backgrounds. In addition to this, she explores the idea that one individual can relate or form part of more than one cultural group. This is achieved by portraying the self as a subject in all the photographs, but with different spices which suggest different cultural heritage and interactions.

Bhabha (1995:34-35) refers to power and domination in a colonial community that empowers a certain ethnic group and robs another of power. In the decline of colonial rule this power struggle between ethnic groups is levelled, but it complicates the question of ethnicity as it claims that more than one cultural group is ethnic to a certain location. The cross-influence between the oppressor and the subaltern voices or expressions that result in a postcolonial and multi-cultural identity is seen in both works, which show an initial confusion in identity. The initial confusion in identity is bridged by the acceptance of a rich multi-layered and multi-cultural postcolonial identity.

This same question arises in Searle's work as she apparently does not favour a spice from a specific culture above another, but explores the different combinations in cultural identity fairly by not claiming authority to one of the spices above the others. Because all the spices and, therefore all the cultures she covers herself in, have the same authority in this work; she shows that there is not dominant new influence on her cultural identity, but that all new influences carry the same weight.

Searle does not only show herself to adapt to one culture's cooking traditions, but the series features a number of spices and shows the self's ability to constantly, but subconsciously adapt to accommodate the characteristics of external culture. She then shows the formulation of identity (in a cultural, personal and political sense) as a process that is never complete and always still in progression. This correlates to the formulation of nomadic identity as the nomad is a metaphor for fluid thoughts and concepts in the process of becoming (Braidotti 1994:9). Just as Jamal (2005:69-70) believes that South Africans have to embrace the new and developing sovereignty in culture in order to adapt to it, Braidotti shows in the argument above that fluidity in nomadic identity will always be changing to adapt to new environments.

2.3 Nomadism and fluidity in postcolonial identity

With regard to the blurring of borders between cultures, Mackay (2000:4) argues that "with new communication technologies, we are moving towards a 'global village'[3] in which communication and community can be freed from their physical or geographical constraints and a greater diversity of voice can be heard". Both Mackay (2000:5) and Browning, Halcli & Webster (2000:6) refer to present-day society as a culture that is rooted in unified and homogenous cultural diversity. Durham (1998:188) argues that the postmodern culture is one where a desire towards free-floating, nomadic communities exists.

Globalism is often also referred to as internationalism (Browning, Halcli & Webster 2000:5), but the term globalism seems to be a more correct reference to a sociological situation because it implies one world and thus one unified culture. In addition, internationalism recognises a constant cross-influence of different cultures, nations, borders and economies on one another (Mackay 2000:7). Although both these terms acknowledge the decline of definite cultural and economic borders, globalism sees the world as one entity, but internationalism only acknowledges that different nationalisms influence one another. Because of this inter-cultural infiltration, Browning, Halcli &

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[3] According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby 2000, sv "global village"), a global village indicates 'the whole world, looked at as a single community that is connected by electronic communication systems.'

Webster (2000:4) believes that 'we are increasingly able to appreciate the lack of fixity of arrangements in the world today.' The diffusion of culture in a globalised sense is thus not seen as a threat, but as liberating an individual from a formal set of social rules that must be followed.

Although liberating, Browning, Halcli & Webster (2000:6) acknowledge a confusion of cultural heritage and identity in the global citizen because individuals are divided in the in the new hybridised formations of culture. In theory, globalisation aims to create a unified culture and to do away with segmentation and fragmentation in culture (Mackay 2000:57), but the growth of global communication makes us aware of inequalities and cultural differences. In addition to this indication of the development of a multi-cultural global society, rather than unified and pure globalism, Mackay (2000:56) argues that, with the rise of globalism, a need was created to overcome cultural differences by the development of collective values and a community where all global citizens are equal.

Both Beck (2006:73) and Venn (2006:184) argues that globalisation and cosmopolitanism are closely linked because they influence one another. In a globalised world, an individual cannot deny the growing tendencies towards cosmopolitanism. Venn (2006:184) identifies four cultural aspects in contemporary culture that indicate a globalising world: the first indication lies in the significant acceleration of flows across the world: flows of images, people, money, technology and ideas. Secondly, Venn (2006:184) identifies the idea of the compression of the world, made possible by the technologies of communication and transport.

In addition to communication and transport, the distribution of cultural products accelerates the displacement of the self (Venn 2006:184). He refers to this as "time-space compression" because it accelerates contact between cultures in a short period of time and promotes displacement across borders that separate cultural spaces. The third cultural manifestation of globalisation can be seen in the tendency towards cultural homogenization. The last indication of globalisation lies in the recognition that there are different forms of globalisation: globalisation is a complex network of inter-relations and networks that should not be reduced to simple good/bad effects of culture (Venn 2006:184).

Favell and Modood (2003:485) identify a problem inherent to multi-culturalism, namely that certain cultures (often minority cultures) are persuaded to adapt to the more influential (and majority) cultures to promote cultural acceptance. This process starts by being tolerant towards other cultures and it progresses to accepting ideologies from the opposing culture. Their answer to this question is in correlation with Einsberg's (2000:397) belief that an individual can still acknowledge their cultural origin (and thus the identity of the culture from which the individual originates) and chose to what extent they are willing to adapt to the majority culture. In doing so, an individual can choose the extent to which he/she wants to be part of the new hybrid culture. While the idea that all individuals belong to a new homogenised culture cannot be ignored, the margin of participation into the hybrid culture varies.

Braidotti (2001:7) refers to the nomad's consecutive displacement from a fixed location - a displacement that does not only show the non-definitive nature of nomadic identity, but also the fluid character thereof; as such manifestations of identity show that it is never fixed to one location or one frame of mind. Nomadic theories of the self originated in the 8500 BCE concept of the nomad as the hunter-gatherer who moved from one place to another in search of food and shelter; therefore, prominent to nomadic theories are ideas of fluidity, movement and progress (Oskal [sl]:2). The nomad/hunter-gatherer relocates to find food and shelter, which is influenced by the changing environment. As the environment changes, the possibility arises that the environment cannot sustain the hunter-gatherer and he needs to relocate. Essential supplies may be exhausted in one area, requiring relocation to another area with abundant recourses. The nomad then moves with the location of essential produce and shelter and is constantly in search thereof. The concept of the nomad thus signals the relinquishment and deconstruction of any sense of fixed identity and the ever-moving concept of the nomad can be connected with the everlasting necessity for change (Braidotti 2001:2-3).

Embedded in nomadic thought, we encounter the individual's natural adaption to the characteristics of a hybrid culture as a process of adopting a fluid identity. The nomad relates to logy (and logical development) and homogenisation of culture by simultaneously accepting the necessity to evolve and the process involved in this evolution (Braidotti 2002:365-266). Braidotti (2002:266) argues that this logical

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advancement influences the development of the nomadic body-machine in a posthuman sense. The machine-like element in nomadic theory refers to the dynamic process of interaction between human and non-human components of cultural interface (Braidotti 2002:266) and shows the self's ability to adapt to external forces, such as present-day cultural demands. It also shows the undeniable presence that technology, and thus mass media, has on culture.

According to Braidotti (1994:4),

> Nomadic subjects are a myth, that is to say a political fiction that allows [you] to think through and move across established categories and levels of experience: blurring boundaries without burning bridges. Implicit in [the choice of this figuration] is the belief in the potency and relevance of the imagination, of myth making, as a way to step out of the political and intellectual stasis of these postmodern times.

With Braidotti's view (quoted above) in mind, both the nomadic elite and the disenfranchised poor nomad are in the process of blurring boundaries by moving across categories of locality, weather, physical location or frame of mind.

In the same way that Searle explores differences in postcolonial cultural identity, Braidotti (1994:4) argues that multi-cultural differences in age, class, gender, ethnicity and race can influence the formation of a nomadic subject. Nomadic thought, as critical consciousness, is thus formulated when these differences are acknowledged as part of the society that the individual lives in. According to Braidotti (1994:15) an individual does not physically have to be in motion or moving from one place to another to accept nomadic subjectivity, but the flexibility (or movement) of an individual's thoughts and opinions can create a strong presence of nomadic consciousness. Because Searle is re-constructing her identity as postcolonial, she does not only aim to do away with the definite differentiation in racial identities (Van der Watt 2004:3), but in doing so she also shows the presence and need for fluidity and adaptability in identity.

Such fluidity and adaptability is encountered in Searle's *Snow White* (2001), where re-construction of identity and the construction and maintaining of an ever-changing identity are depicted. As this work was commissioned by Olu Oguibe and Salah Hassen for their

show at the 49th Venice Biennale, Searle had the means to cooperate with a production company (van der Watt 2004: 3) and the installation was shown in darkened open-air surroundings. According to van der Watt (2004:3), this work developed out of the conceptual terrain of the earlier *Colour Me* series which also showed intent to 'unfix' the self through strategies of appearance and disappearance. In figure four below, documentation of this work is shown when it was exhibited in Cape Town later in 2001.

Figure 4:Berni Searle, *Still* (Installation view) (2001).
Installation, 8 digital prints on backlit paper, 120 x 120cm each.
Installation view: The Granary, Cape Town.
(Perryer 2004:39).

The original installation of the work featured two screens that showed the same scene filmed from two different angles. In the sequential set of images below (figures 5 – 9) the image on the left shows a full frontal view, whereas the image on the right was filmed from a slightly higher angle. The viewer is introduced to Searle's seated and unclothed body where she kneels in a pool of light on a large void-like area (Kellner 2006:16). By placing her hands on her knees, both Kellner (2006:17) and Farrel (2006:22) connect Searle's arrangement of her body to be similar to that of the Venus of Willendorf.

Figure 5:   Berni Searle, *Snow White* a (Still images from video) (2001).
Two channel video projection, DVD format, shot from DVCAM, duration: 9 mins, sound.
(Perryer 2004:35).

Figure 6:   Berni Searle, *Snow White* b (Still images from video) (2001).
Two channel video projection, DVD format, shot from DVCAM, duration: 9 mins, sound.
(Perryer 2004:35).

Figure 7:   Berni Searle, *Snow White* c (Still images from video). (2001).
Two channel video projection, DVD format, shot from DVCAM, duration: 9 mins, sound.
(Perryer 2004:35).

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Figure 8:   Berni Searle, *Snow White* d (Still images from video) (2001).
Two channel video projection, DVD format, shot from DVCAM, duration: 9 mins, sound.
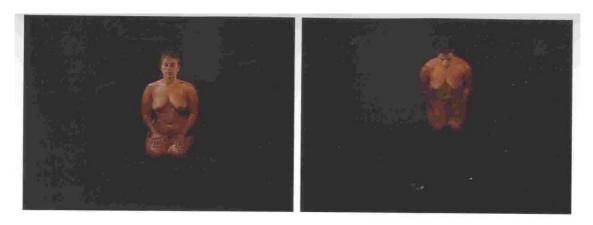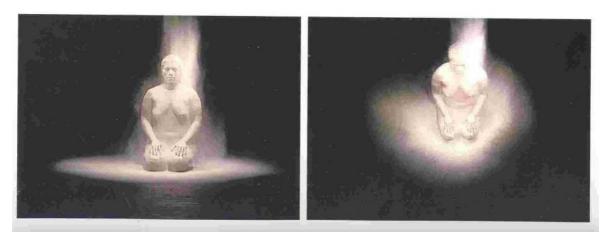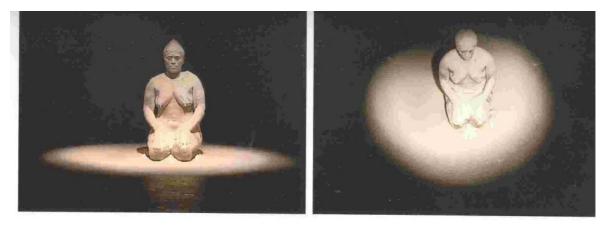(Perryer 2004:36).

Figure 9:   Berni Searle, *Snow White* e (Still images from video) (2001).
Two channel video projection, DVD format, shot from DVCAM, duration: 9 mins, sound.
(Perryer 2004:37).

While the viewer is surrounded by darkness and confronted with the anticipation of what will happen next, Searle is showered with flour from above (as seen in figure six). As the flour connects with Searle's body, it shows her as a reformed white silhouette. According to Kellner (2006:18), the white glow of Searle's body, as a result of the whiteness of the falling flour, resembles exterior colour transformation. Kellner does not elaborate on this statement, but we can connect this transformation with more than just a transformation from brown to white, or from darkness to illuminated to indicate a metamorphosis in outward identity.

In the next sequence of images, Searle's body is still shown as motionless; allowing masses of flour to filter down on top her as if it is not unexpected. The motionless body in combination with the composition it adopts transforms into a sculptural depiction of the

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self. Van der Watt (2004:4) acknowledges that Searle's body was previously out of focus to the viewer, but after it was covered with flour, it becomes defined in the darkness. Van der Watt (2004:4) notes this aspect as Searle's intricate play between appearance and disappearance, but it also strengthens the notion of transformation as Searle's body transformed into an elaborated form. Just as we become accustomed to Searle's body which transformed into a sculpture-like object, water dripping from above starts to deteriorate the familiar form.

The dripping water almost erases the flour that covered Searle's body as a process to allow her to reclaim her original form (Kellner 2006:18). In addition to the erasing quality of the water, it mixed with the flour transforming the medium to dough. In figure eight Searle starts wiping this dough-like mass from her body thereby reclaiming her original form (van der Watt 2004:5) and therefore reclaiming her identity. The process of events strongly indicates that the formulation of identity is a process combining different cultural aspects.

As an addition to the aspect of transformation, Searle starts to knead the dough to form a product from this process. As she kneads the dough, it's form changes. The product of this process (dough) can adapt its form to tolerate external force that is applied to it. This in itself can be seen as a transformation of identity as the dough is manipulated.

By manipulating the form of the dough and transforming its shape, the erasure of its previous form occurs. This is in coherence with what happened to Searle's body in this artwork. We may wonder what the effect of this transformation is on memory and how the history influence future nomadic thoughts. As the subject's form was transformed several times in this artwork to show fluidity in identity by re-creating identity, one possibility is to say that the memory was intentionally erased in this process. Another possibility would be to deconstruct this attempt to erase the memory by still acknowledging memory in order to enable its erasure.

Similar to the adaptive model of the Protean self (discussed later in this chapter), which shows the self adapting to external influences; Braidotti (2001:3) argues that the nomad stands for the everlasting necessity for change. The nomad does not accept a fixed sense of identity and is thus constantly in the process of moving towards a new aspect of

identity (Braidotti 2001:3). Braidotti (2001:4) sees the body in nomadic theory as a vehicle of transportation and movement from one place to another, moreover, from one frame of mind to another.

As the nomad stands for the relinquishment and deconstruction of any sense of fixed identity, the ever-moving concept of the nomad can be connected to the everlasting necessity for change (Braidotti 2001:3). Braidotti (2001:3) also argues that the nomad is a deconstructive concept as it exists in one place (seen as a construct), but because the nomad has the need to move, its existence in one fixed place is destructed. Like the Protean self, the nomad is never stationary, but always in the process of optimising change in order to construct identity.

By passing through places, the nomad is in search of a flexible notion of identity (Adendorff 2005:52). According to van der Watt (2003:3), fluidity in identity is dramatically visualised in almost all of Searle's works, but her *A Matter of Time* (2003) (Figure 10, 11 & 12) conveys this idea in the strongest manner. *A Matter of Time* (Figure 10) is a DVD projection in which Searle is engaged in what is really a balancing act (van der Watt 2003:3). The work was shot with a stationary camera installed under a glass box that was suspended eight meters in the air.

Figure 10:   Berni Searle, *A Matter of Time* (Installation view) (2003).
One channel video projection, DVD format. Duration: 3 mins 30 secs, sound.
Installation view: Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, California.
(Perryer 2004:59).

In *A Matter of Time* (2003) (Figure 10), the viewer is confronted with a monumental video projection where the viewer sees the soles of Searle's feet surrounded by olive oil. It seems as if Searle is walking onto the transparent surface on which the work is projected. Van der Watt (2004:2) acknowledges that this work is filled with arbitrary angles which leave the viewer with a feeling of uneasiness. According to Farrel (2006:21), 'Searle's use of organic matter (such as olive oil) to mask her body, functions as a method to complicate notions of identity by blending elements of fantasy and reality.'
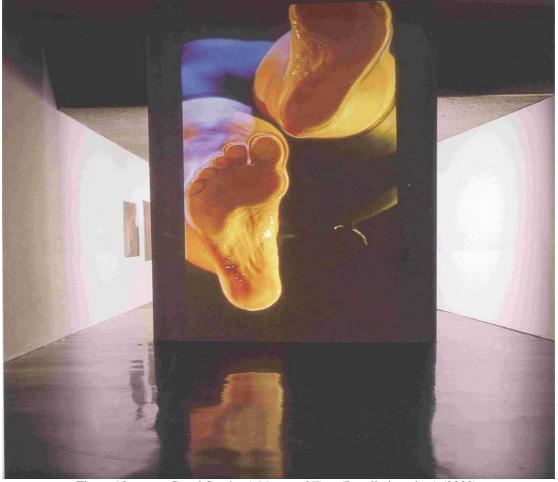
Figure 11:   Berni Searle, *A Matter of Time* a (Still images form video) (2003).
One channel video projection, DVD format. Duration: 3 mins 30 secs, sound.
Installation view: Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, California.
(Perryer 2004:60).

Filmed from the soles of her feet upwards, Searle stands before the viewer in a secluded space enclosed by a glass frame. While Searle confronts the viewer with the nothingness that surrounds her, olive oil slides down the glass surface on which she stands. The olive oil invades the space around her feet to add a slippery quality to the surface (van der Watt 2003:2). Searle starts walking on this slippery surface, trying not to glide even though it is unavoidable.

While filming, Searle moved in a horizontal direction, but the projector was turned sideways when the work was on display. This results in footage that shows Searle walking up and sliding down on a vertical plane – as if she was filmed lying on her back walking up and sliding down a slippery glass wall (van der Watt 2003:3). There is no sound track; the only sound source for this video is the high pitch sound when Searle's feet slip on the glass surface. When she has walked to the end of the glass frame, she disappears out of the picture plane, and the video starts again.

Figure 12:   Berni Searle, *A Matter of Time* b (Still images from video), 2003.
One channel video projection, DVD format. Duration: 3 mins 30 secs, sound.
Installation view: Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, California.
(Perryer 2004:61).

A matter of time (2003) (Figure 10, 11 & 12) does not only speak of the unfixed notion of identity, but it shows identity as a nomadic concept. Like Searle, the nomad is constantly in the process of discovering its identity and adapting it to its surroundings. Confronted by the slippery surface, Searle had to adjust her physical movement in order to 'survive' as a walking subject. Adendorff (2005:90) acknowledged the connection that this work has with nomadic identity.

> Searle's choice of oil as medium of transportation provides an ideal liminal space where identity can mutate and change at will … . On the other hand, the fluid quality of the oil is representative of Searle's seamless journey in the interstitial space towards nomadic subjectivity (Adendorff 2005:90).

In the development of nomadic thought as a critical consciousness, Searle's work shows the fluidity that an individual must have in his/her mindset to adapt to a postcolonial society where political and cultural identity becomes a complex, and sometimes confusing idea. Searle's work does not only show an individual's ability to adapt to this ever-changing world, but also comments on a new hybrid identity which can change again when the need arises.

2.4 Proteanism as adaptive model in postcolonial identity

According to McAdams (1997:46) "contemporary psychoanalysis and postmodern theory tend to agree that the self is more multiple than solitary, and more so today than ever

before". Rosenberg (1997:23) argues that all aspects of the self are a social and cultural product and because an individual lives in a complex society, the self has to adapt to its multifaceted surroundings. McAdams (1997:48) states that the multiple postmodern self is rooted in the Protean model of the self. As the Protean model of the self is regarded as an adaptive model, it suggests that people change over time and a new formulation of the self can replace the old self (Mc Adams 1997:49).

The primary theory of Proteanism refers to the postmodern individual's ability to change his/her views and behaviours to adapt to a diverse multi-cultural society. Derived from Greek mythology, this model suggests that, like the Greek god Proteus, an individual can take on whatever forms and qualities demanded by a particular situation (McAdams 1997:48). The Protean model of the self shows the individual's ability to adapt his/hers identity to the diverse cultural forces in postmodern culture by adapting his/her consciousness accordingly. It is as a result of the diversity in postmodern culture that this psychoanalytical model of the self is relevant to an investigation of identity.

Similar to nomadic identity, Protean identity shows that the individual morphs into an altered identity in relation to the postmodern situation it finds itself in. The morphed identity is only adopted as a temporary identity and as soon as the situation changes, the postmodern individual's identity changes with the new situation as an unconscious process. This brings forth the idea of multiple selves, but as mentioned, the multiplicities of the self are not isolated entities, but functions as a multifarious system.

Lifton (1993:2-3) postulates that the Protean model of the self shows how the self functions and adapts to a diverse and multi-dimensional postmodernist culture. In addition to the Protean self's ability to adapt to cultural requirements, the Protean self shows a multi-dimensional, fragmented, splintered and fluid identity. The Protean self, like the nomad, is always in the process of becoming and the process of establishing identity (Lifton 1993:3).

In theory, the Protean model allows us to understand how 'selves' evolve and morph into a new formation in contemporary culture. Lifton (1993:1) points out that, without realising it, individuals are becoming fluid and many-sided because they have to adapt to the multidimensional society in which they live. Lifton (1993:1) refers to the evolution of

the self as a direct, but unconscious reaction to the relentless fluctuation in society that reflects on us. The effect that the forces of a changing society have on individuals and the structure of society does not only 'manipulate the self from the outside, but shapes it importantly from within' (Lifton 1993:2-3). Although the Protean self must cope with, and even evolve with the continuous transformations in cultures, Lifton (1993:5) acknowledges its search for a degree of form, grounding and cohesion.

Lifton (1993:6) states that, because the Protean self must be a shape-shifter in order to adapt to society, cohesion is never a longstanding effect. On the constant presence of a quest for both cohesion and multiple dimensions of the self, Lifton (1993:9) writes:

> Proteanism involves a quest for authenticity and meaning, a form-seeking assertion of the self… . The Protean self seeks to be both fluid and grounded, however tenuous that combination … . Proteanism, then, is a balancing act between responsive shape shifting, on the one hand, and efforts to consolidate and cohere, on the other.

As demonstrated in *A matter of time* (2003) (Figures 10, 11 & 12)*, the quest to find and show identity can never be completed because the multi-faceted forces of society (such as historical dislocation and the revolution of mass media) on citizens are becoming stronger (Lifton 1993:74). The integrative expressions of Proteanism manifest as a result of this ongoing quest to find the self (Lifton 1993:75). Although Rosenberg (1997:48) argues that the multiplicity of the Protean self exists in both the temporal and spatial sense, he agrees with Lifton that the Protean self is an ongoing quest. To Rosenberg (1997:49) the Protean model of the self as depicted in *A matter of time* (2003) (Figure 10, 11 & 12), celebrates 'hybridity, impurity, intermingling of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics and it rejoices in the mongrelisation and fears the absolute pure.'

In addition to Rosenberg's views on mongrelisation, Lifton (1993:190) stresses that a level of unity is difficult to maintain in Proteanism because an individual struggles to maintain a certain "poise or balance" in order to 'function in an ever-changing world.' Lifton (1993:191) explains:

> That poise is bound up with agility, with flexible adaptation, and is less a matter of steady and predictable direction than manoeuvrability and talent for coping with widely divergent circumstances. To maintain this poise, it may be necessary to cultivate and sustain strong tendencies towards mockery and humour for 'lubricating' experiences, emotions and

communities that are 'free-floating', fragmentary ideas rather than large belief systems, and the continuous improvisation in social and occupational arrangements and in expressions of conciliation and protest.

Failure to maintain this poise can result in negative Proteanism (Lifton 1993:191, Rosenberg 1997:53) where the fluidity in this adaptive model is severely lacking in moral content and sustainable inner form to the extent that the desirable inter-play between the fragments of the self become so fragmented that there is no conciliation between the fragments of the self. Lifton (1993:200-201) states that negative Proteanism can be temporary and due to the Protean self's shape-shifting abilities, he can establish the poise of balance again. The poise of balance in Proteanism then maintains interwoven relationships between the fragments that the self consist of.

Selves exist in communities, and Lifton's ideas on how the self function in a community adds to the argument of fluidity. Lifton (1993:103) acknowledges that communities are partial and fluctuating. In addition to this, Lifton (1993:103) believes that communities for the Protean self come in odd places and combinations; are often at a distance and vary greatly in their intensity and capacity to satisfy the needs of the members. Because the community cannot always satisfy the needs of the Protean self, the search for belonging to a certain community is extended and cultural borders are crossed in this quest. With regard to cultural borders, this argument has reference to postcolonialism as the theory aims to erase colonised cultural borders.

The integration of cultures is strengthened by technological advancement and mass-media, which make different cultures more accessible to a wider range or people and other cultures. In a global society, we encounter a strong presence of multi-culturalism. In a multi-cultural society, we adopt a new hybrid identity that is different from the unified and pure nation-state cultural identity that was found in colonialism. One of the means by which we adapt to such a multi-cultural society is the formulation of a Protean self as a postmodern psychoanalytical variation of the cultural self. The altering of subjective consciousness is seen in the postcolonial theories and postmodern cultural discourses or Proteanism and Nomadism.

Nomadic and Protean multiplicities of the self are not adaptive models that originated only because of multi-cultural situations, but also have its roots in simulations; ones

identity can be seen as a simulation or reflection of the culture the individual exists in. With the growing presence of multi-culturalism and the development towards a global culture, culture becomes increasingly fragmented and simulated. As culture exists as a product of the events in its history, it is shaped by either a reaction to the history or the repetition of known traditions from its history. When culture exists as a reaction to its history, traces of the history will still be present in that culture. Existing culture is then a simulated product of its preceding culture.

2.5 Diasporic societies

The decline of definite cultural borders in a postmodern society is brought forward by diasporic activity or the physical transcendence between national borders. Regardless of this transcendence between borders, nomadic thought allows the postmodern individual to retain identity in a postcolonial environment.

Although the concept of diaspora is integrated in most of Searle's work, *Home and Away* (2003) (Figure 13) illustrates the process of movement from one continent, or culture, to another and the need to re-construct identity due to this movement across borders.

According to Venn (2006:182), with regard to diaspora in a postcolonial sense, we must recognise that 'migrancy has been endemic to the history of cultures in all periods.' Venn (2006:182) also argues that migration or the flow of cultures, is evident in the development of cities and the urban centres of empires over the ages because of the movement of people to the cities. He refers to diaspora as a combination between migration and dispersion and points out that we must acknowledge the fluidity in culture that has come forward as a result of this diffusion of culture. Venn (2006:182) refers to diaspora as an element that ruptured the 'imagined community' that existed in colonial rule, to create a postcolonial society where inter-cultural influence became free flowing. The ideal of a linear and homogenous culture, which existed in the concept of the 'imagined community', was destructed by the migration and dispersion of cultures into one another. The aim of colonial rule was to create and develop linear and homogenous cultures in order to constitute to a nation-state identity, but Venn (2006:182) argues that all cultures are 'polyglot and Diasporic.'

Figure 13:   Berni Searle, *Home and Away* (Still images from video) (2003).
Lithograph on BFK watercolour paper, 660mm x 505mm.
Photo credit: Gaëtane Hermans.
Collection: Private. (Bester 2004:49).

Diaspora undermined the discourse of colonialism to bring forth a more emancipating task to reform cultures in the form of postcolonialism (Venn 2006:4). Diaspora in a postcolonial sense links cultures to one another; according to Venn (2006:44), the synergetic mixing of cultures that resulted from diaspora created scope for the discourse in which intertwined cultural configurations are defined. Venn (2006:44) believes that this new transformative re-construction of cultures is marked by contestation, but does not exclude one culture from the new cosmopolitan re-construction of culture. This leaves a hybrid culture where dynamic inter-cultural relationships are reformed into a new fragmented, but unified hybrid culture.

As the nomad moves from one place to another in order to locate resources to survive and temporarily inhabits a certain location, nomadic theory optimises the movement from one place to another. This allows the nomad to move on when the need arises, because the nomad knows that the necessity to be on the move again is inevitably drawing closer.

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Because the nomad is moving from one place to another, it has a strong reference to Diaspora. The nomad becomes a vehicle by which Diasporas take place, as the nomad is migrating to a new location (Braidotti 2002:176). Braidotti (2001:4) acknowledges a connection between the nomad and the migrant as the nomad and the migrant are both relocating. However, it is important to acknowledge the difference between the nomad and the migrant because the migrant does not plan to move again, whilst the nomad knowingly inhabits a space temporarily before he/she needs to relocate.

Bester (2004:45) describes Berni Searle's video *Home and Away* (2003) (Figure 13) as floating in-between spaces. The image of a floating body might also become a metaphor for migration, or hybrid change. Although Bester speaks of migration, in this sense it refers to nomadism, because the body becomes a vehicle of transportation and movement from one place to another. Braidotti (2001:5) notes another differences between the nomad and the migrant; while the migrant is in exile and has no choice but to feel at home in a newly found hosting space, the nomad's home (and its location) moves. Braidotti (2001:6) refers to the nomad's consecutive displacement of a fixed location; this means that the nomad is aware that the future is filled with continuous transportation. The migrant, on the other hand, is establishing his home in a new location and does not plan, or need to, relocate repeatedly. Both the nomad and the migrant have the promise of future possibilities when they are on the move to a new location as can be seen in the view of Searle's *Home and Away* (2003) (Figure 13):

> Migration is so much about imagining, about using the fantasy of a place somewhere else to motivate and complete a journey, and in many ways, *Home and Away* is a meditation on the luxury of a future of possibilities (Bester 2004:48).

Searle's *Home and Away* depicts the artist as she literally floats between the two continents of Africa and Europe (Bester 2004:47), a location situated near the Strait of Gibraltar and a place with many historical and geopolitical references to the movement of humans and trade (van der Watt 2003:5). With regard to this location's historical and geographical reference to Searle, who is an artist of mixed heritage, Van der Watt (2003:5) maintains that 'this locale immediately appealed to Searle for its allusions to contact and exchange, to insertion and dispersal, to displacement and Diaspora - in short, a contact zone crammed with both poetry and pain.'

The artist resembles the nomad who is displaced but travelling to a space that is more meaningful. Trapped between the 'poetry and pain' which Van der Watt (2003:5) refers to, the artist uses natural forces to show herself as floating on this border between pain and harmony. The flowing force of the ocean signifies movement and progress towards a new location. Searle is shown wearing a red satin skirt with a semi-transparent white overlay; the hem of this skirt was piped with polystyrene to make it float in the water. The film is shot using a camera attached to a crane on a boat which floated next to Searle. The boat moved in a similar way to the floating Searle and van der Watt (2003:4) acknowledges that this created an 'unstable hovering quality of a slow shot that seems to zoom in and out with Searle floating in and out of the frame.'

Later on in the film sequence, there are several frames where the sky is filmed – almost as if it shows Searle's view from her position floating on her back. Thereafter the camera pans to a distant landscape as the destination to which Searle is floating. It is not clear if this landscape is her origin (Morocco) or her destination (Spain), but Van der Watt (2003:6) believes that it is not important to know which landscape is shown, because the landscape signifies land in general which can be seen as 'an anchor of recognition in our attempts to locate the drifting body somewhere in place or time.'

Bester (2004:49) identifies a sense of estrangement that was created by the audio layer of this video. He explains that this estrangement is achieved by a voice that almost whispers English and Spanish verbs for "to love", "to fear" and "to leave" (Bester 2004:49-50). In addition to Bester's connection with estrangement, Van der Watt (20003:7) connects the flowing of black fluid into the picture plane to a fearful and estranged experience. To provide a possible meaning connected to this invasion Van der Watt (2003:7) makes the following comment:

> One possible reference is to squid's ink, which is released when under threat, and obliquely to Spain where squid's ink has become a gastronomic delicacy. As we lose the form and colour of the body to the contamination of black ink, we are made to realise the fragility of that coherent form; we are in effect witnessing the foreign within the known. Do we see a body or a squid or something else altogether?

To answer Van der Watt's question, the presence of the unidentified black liquid merely invades the viewer's vision of the original form, the fragments of Searle's floating body.

Moreover, this invasion, whether intentional or unintentional, must be acknowledged as an aspect of change away from the original form to establish a new form. The original form represents the self, but it becomes alienated because it is covered by a layer of black fluid that gradually erases the original sense of self. It is in embracing the alienation and the knowledge of the original form, or the original self, that this work speaks of fluidity, progress and change.

In nomadic theory, the origin and the destination are recognised by an existence between the place of departure and the location where one will end up. Greater than the acknowledgement of the origin and the destination, the process of moving, floating or migrating in a nomadic sense is the essence of this work. Or as Van der Watt (2003:8) refers to it: 'We are confronted with the "away" part of home, with that which disrupts the comfort zone of the known for us - the "unhomely" within the home, the uncanny that unsettles us once and for all and makes us recognise that we are not as securely located in our identities as we would like to be.'

2.6 Cosmopolitanism in a borderless society

Identity, in a cosmopolitan sense, is referred to as a circular model of identity (Street 2001:2) where an individual should regard him/herself as surrounded by concentric circles. In cosmopolitanism, individuals become global citizens – citizens who do not have geographical constraints. Street (2001:1) describes cosmopolitanism[4] as the idea that all of humanity belongs to a single moral community. In these circles, an individual finds different aspects that influence his/her identity formation. The inner circle surrounds only the self, whereas the second circle surrounds the immediate family (as well as the inner circle). The third circle surrounds the extended family. These circles are extended until the circle that includes the self (which is situated in the middle) exists in a system that ends in the biggest circle, which represents global identity (Street 2001:2-3).

When the circular model of identity reaches the outer circle, all the world's citizens are included in the circle and thus, an individual undeniably forms part of a global culture. The boundaries between states, cultures or societies are irrelevant in a cosmopolitan

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[4] Street (2001:1) traces the origin of cosmopolitanism from the Greek word *cosmopolites*, which means *world citizen*. When Diogenes of Sinope (c. 412 B.C.), who was part of the Cynic movement in Ancient Greece, was asked where he was from, he reportedly said that he was a citizen of the world (Street 2001:2).

sense. Global citizens who travel and relocate achieve the blurring of cultural borders as influences of other cultures are assimilated when an individual visits a location outside of their usual frame of reference.

Beck[5] (2006:72) sees the goal of cosmopolitanism to expand the provincial national horizon of sociology through a methodological cosmopolitanism. This is achieved by the dynamics of a global market which undermines state borders towards an era of globalisation. Beck (2006:72-73) refers to a cosmopolitan culture as one where differentiations are, at the same time, blurred and acknowledged between similar and dissimilar, local and global. The cosmopolitan self then has to acknowledge its own identity in terms of nationalism and the new formation of nation-state identity. As South Africans, we are aware of our heritage, but cannot deny the new formations in society. As such, culture has become a non-exclusive space due to the inclusion of aspects that are culturally dissimilar. It is in this argument that cosmopolitan South Africans have to rethink their identity in terms of nationalism and nation-state identity. In this globalised community aspects of diaspora and multi-culturalism can be identified in the newly formed cultural hybridities. Such hybrid identity and cosmopolitan culture manifests in Brett Murray's *Africa a* (2000), Figure 14.

Sue Williamson (2004:262), a South African artist, writer and art-critic, acknowledges that Murray's definition of himself as a "white, middle-class cultural hybrid that grew up in a political and social system that simultaneously protected and restricted, empowered and disempowered him" which influenced the cultural comment inherent to his work. The cultural comments that he communicates through this comic-like art include the complex peculiarities and abnormalities of the fusion in South African culture (Williamson 2004:262). This fusion influences his style in which he breaks stereotypes down in the sense that all cultural aspects are hybrid. This sculpture consists of a bronze figure that resembles an African influence in the style combined with bright yellow Bart Simpson figurines, a popular character from an American television programme which is broadcasted globally. By combining the traditional African, relic-like style with this Bart Simpson figure, derived from Western main-stream animation media, as he had done in *Africa a* (2000) (Figure 14), Murray expresses cosmopolitan identity in the sense where

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[5] Ulrich Beck is Professor of Sociology at the Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich.

the Beckian (2006:72-73) differentiations become blurred in terms of the local and the global.

Figure 14: Brett Murray, *Africa* a (2000).
Painted bronze. 340 x 150 x 150 cm.
Installation view: St Georges Mall, Cape Town.
(Perryer 2004:265).

To Koloane (1999:30) the fusion of the old and the new are ever-present in South African contemporary art. The fusion he refers to can be compared to multi-culturalism and postcolonialism as both of these concepts involve the blurring of definite borders in society. This contributes not only to the hybrid cultural varieties discussed earlier, but also to the formation of a hybrid style in visual art in contemporary South Africa. Murray's *Africa* shows a manifestation of a hybridised identity in culture and in art-making: inherent features of a cultural formation where individual aspects (and identities) are integrated into one bigger concept and cultural formation.
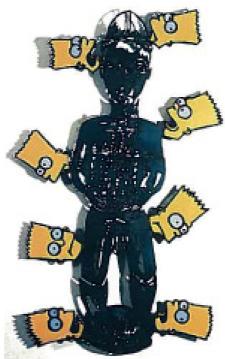
Figure 15:   Brett Murray, *Africa* b (1993).
Metal and Plastic. 229 x 130 x 10 cm.
(Herreman 1999:38)

An earlier version of Murray's *Africa* a (2000) (Figure 15), *Africa b* (1993) (Figure 15), shows a two-dimensional prototype of the later work. Koloane (1999:38) argues that the iconic images with strange cross-cultural references that skirt dangerously close to being politically incorrect is ever-present in Murray's *Africa* b (1993) (Figure 15). Jamal (1996:83) points out that the manifestation of the strange cross-cultural fusion present in Murray's work is the artist's satirical take on what is happening in South African culture.

Both Jamal (1996:84) and Koloane (1999:38) argue that the hybrid cross-cultural reference in Murray's work signifies the need in South African culture and South African art-making to transform and adapt to the varied strong cultural influences. Jamal (1999:85) states that Murray's focus is the cross-over in culture and politics and that it can be seen as either disempowering or liberating and in some cases it can be seen as both liberating and disempowering.

Murray acknowledges international influences on African culture that crosses global borders. There is a paradox in the idea of juxtaposing yellow Bart Simpson figurines onto the almost relic-like traditional sculpture as these iconic elements represent contradictory ideologies. By combining different iconographies into one sculpture, Murray creates a

hybrid cosmopolitan creature. The assembly of these hybrid influences manifests as a metaphor for hybridity, multi-culturalism and diversity in a postcolonial culture.

Although constructed from paradoxes, the sculpture forms a unity that mocks the current cultural situation more than it questions it. Such mockery is achieved in the comical style of the Bart Simpson figurines, but moreover in the combination thereof with the traditional (and sacred) form of sculpture. The work becomes a cosmopolitanised version of the African idiom[6] as a result of postcolonialism and postmodernism in South African culture and a metaphor for the transformation in postmodern culture which includes the growing development of globalism, multi-culturalism and cosmopolitanism.

The postmodern South African artist is not only faced with the dilemma of establishing an identity in a contradicting art-making environment, but also with how the identity his/her work portrays, fits into the international platform of art-making (D'Amato 1999:47). Williamson (1999:34) agrees that in the search to establish a distinct South African identity, artists and visual communicators became aware of the need for *ubuntu.*[7] The artist's role became more concerned with simultaneously distinguishing and associating the South African style into the global platform. The integration into the global platform was not by choice, but as a result of the growing infiltration of cultural borders and communication that crossed these borders.

The new non-exclusive cultural space - the cosmopolitan space - is one where individuals with different identities exist. This new non-exclusive cultural space does not optimise a restricted group-identity. Instead, it acknowledges that all identities are dependent on each other in the process of forming an individual's own identity. According to Beck (2006:73), this interdependence that different identities have on one another can be seen as a level of destruction of what was previously perceived as civilisation. In this argument Beck does not mean that civilization is destroyed, but only the previous formation thereof.

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[6] The term *African idiom* refers to the European understanding that originated in early 1970s that art produced in Africa has an element of craft and traditional workmanship, but is combined with contemporary themes and techniques (Seroto 1999:15).

[7]'Ubuntu' refers to the African Philosophy of Humanism (Williamson 1999:34). Archbishop Desmond Tutu (in Batttle 1997:4) defined 'ubuntu' as: "A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed."

As cosmopolitanism does not undermine individual identity, but promotes the interaction of different identities to overcome borders, a new cosmopolitan civilization becomes apparent. Thompson[8] (2003:2) argues that the difference between multi-culturalism and cosmopolitanism lies in the idea that multi-culturalism is based on the preserving of inherent differences while cosmopolitanism attempts to bridge these differences. This aspect of cosmopolitanism is also clear in Murray's *Africa* as they show different personal identities that contribute to a new entity of a bold hybrid formation in civilization.

Therefore, multi-culturalism implies status based on collectivism – groups of people having more power because of their background and associations (Thompson 2003:2). Collectivist power in multi-culturalism may not always be shared equally and proportionally, but it depends on group identities. In a multi-cultural society, issues of racism or bias invariably summon political figures whose power-base depends on division; cosmopolitanism has an automatic concession to tolerance and equality (Thompson 2003:3).

Although Beck sees cosmopolitanism as something that societies strive for, he also sees it as a product of the growing need for societal expansion (Beck 2006:74). In addition to this, Beck (2006:73) believes that 'there is a growing awareness that we are living within a global network of responsibility from which no one of us can escape.' Beck (2006:73-75) explains the responsibility that the cosmopolitan self has towards culture. Firstly, regardless of whether the cosmopolitan self has relocated or is situated in its country of birth, it has a responsibility to acknowledge its original nation-state identity. Secondly, the cosmopolitan self has a responsibility towards the identification of a globalising world in order to acknowledge the pluralism of society that does not exclude individuals with different nation-state identities (Beck 2006:73-75). Beck (2006:88) refers to the global-local dialectic as a process where the rediscovering and redefining of the local contributes to an individual's understanding of the global in a cosmopolitan sense.

To optimise Street's explanation of the circular model of cosmopolitan identity, we have to begin with the circular model at an individual's location or origin, which is regularly their nation-state identity. From there, we draw circles around the individual and around

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[8] John Thompson is president of the Mackenzie Institute in Toronto which studies political instability and terrorism.

the different levels of society. That will eventually end in one circle that indicates a cosmopolitan (global) society. When drawing these concentric circles around the self, it is inevitable that this will result in a circle that indicates a global, or rather, a cosmopolitan society. The idea that the self forms part of a broader spectrum of society than merely a nationalistic society is a cosmopolitan concept.

Closing

In this chapter, the self as it functions in a postmodern culture was explored in relation to a global audience. Postmodern identity is fluid and adapts to cultural changes, thus becoming fragmented. In order to establish the postmodern self as a nomad, the fusion of cultural borders was investigated to show the development of a new and hybrid postmodern culture. It was argued that that the modern-day development of hybrid cultural patterns in South Africa has its origin in the decline of colonialism leading to a culturally diverse postcolonial environment.

This hybridity was not only identified in culture, but also in personal identity. In the next chapter, *Nomadic Manifestations of the Postcolonial Self* the Protean model of adaption will be investigated in conjunction with nomadism with regard to transformation and movement in identity as a natural process to overcome fragmentation.

CHAPTER THREE: NOMADIC MANIFESTATIONS OF THE POSTCOLONIAL SELF

Identity in a diverse community is of necessity multi-dimensional and fragmented. In this chapter, the ways in which the postcolonial self as a nomad become fragmented, reproduced and simulated are explored. The Protean model of self will be utilised to investigate the notion of the displacement of the self in order to contribute to a better understanding of how the self functions in cultural groups, showing the self to be splintered, fragmented and reproducible. Similar to nomadism, Proteanism speculates the individual's involuntary metamorphosis into a new hybrid formation of the self.

In the chapter visual texts are investigated that communicate the postcolonial self's identity as multi-dimensional, bringing forth the concepts of trace, presence/absence, fragmentation, reflection and simulation, all of which are included in the blanket description of the displacement of the self. The duplication (or re-creation) of the self, whether in a mirror or any other reflective surface, or a reference to the self in any other visual manner, can be argued to be a simulation. Because this simulation of the self has a tele-presence, it is argued that a simulation of the self is a virtual copy of the self, or a virtual body.

The contention in this chapter is that postcolonial identity is complex, fragmented and multi-dimensional, and that the self consist of many diverse aspects that form the social self as an entity.

3.1 Multiplicity and reflections of the self

Postmodern authors such as McAdams (1997:46) and Rosenberg (1997:23) argue that the postmodern self is rooted in multiplicity and fragmentation.   When referring to fragmentation, they do not necessarily argue the decay of the self due to ongoing fragmentation, but the successful cohesion and integration of these fragments to contribute to the formulation of a postmodern identity. For McAdams (1997:46), the lack of unity in the self observed in postmodern cultures is due to the apparent multiplicity of contemporary social life. McAdams (1997:46) explains:

There is a great deal of truth in the notion that 'selves' are multiple, fluid, ever changing, and constantly on the move, especially when those 'selves' are constructed and negotiated in postmodern societal contexts.

This section investigates the aspects of the fragmented postmodern self, but also the adaptive models used in maintaining a fluid identity, which subconsciously manipulate the postmodern self to overcome the fragmentation and to exist in and adapt to the diversity of present-day society and to successfully function in a community. With the ability to exist as a fragmented entity in a diverse community, the self becomes multi-dimensional because all the fragments of the postmodern self are connected and interrelated to each other to establish a fluid concept in identity.

Multiplicity, or multi-dimensionality, of the self refers to having different 'selves' in an individual's personality (Rosenberg 1997:23). It also suggests that sub-selves have semantic relevance to one another and that the partitioning of the self is not a threat to existence, but rather shows identity and an individual's personality as complex (Rosenberg 1997:23). The presence of varieties of the self then acts as a shield to the decline of the self due to diversity in cultural demands. Rosenberg (1997:23) argues that because the cultural environment in a postcolonial society is complex and hybrid, the postmodern self is a more complex entity than 'selves' in earlier times.

Although a multiplicity of 'selves' can easily be misunderstood to refer to the layman's term of 'split personalities', Rosenberg (1997:23) stresses that the notion of the multiplicity of the self in contemporary writings refers to the idea that one self can consist of many diverse aspects that work together to form a social self as an entity. The multiplicity of the postmodern self is not seen as a crisis, but a way in which the identity of the self is formed into a unique unity (McAdams 1997:51). It is not the product of personal distress and cultural unrest, but rather transformation in cultures that allows individuals to adopt multiple roles, enact multiple performances in order to negotiate meanings, status and position in everyday life (McAdams 1997:51).

Social identities are linked to the particular exigencies of external role and situational demands, and, as those demands change the corresponding identities change as well (McAdams 1997:51). This promotes the idea that 'selves' reflect the social world and as the world becomes more complex, unity and coherence in self-conceptions should

become flexible and adaptive. Although the postmodern self still strives for unity in identity, the multiplicity and fragmentation thereof can not be ignored.

Coherence in the postmodern self does not entail a simplistic and set model of the self, but one that consists of certain fragments and diversity. It is in the combination of these identity fragments that unity in the self can be located. McAdams (1997:62) refers to the self as possessing a certain level of inner depth due to the combination of these fragments of identity which construct a multi-layered concept of oneself. The formation of the concept of the self in postmodern culture is then dependent on the realisation that it consists of layers in different dimensions and that these layers can be uncovered. The investigation into identity lies in the uncovering of layers and dimensions of the self.

3.2 Reflective multiplicity of the self through simulation

According to Genocchio[1] (2000:15), a reflection or representation of the self is the 'primary site and surface across which individuals as well as collective cultural identities are contested and inscribed.' A reflection of the self contributes to the realisation of an individual's identity, the cultural environment it exists in and how the self has adapted to an ever-changing culture as it is a reproduction of the self. These reproductions of the self manifest not only as a recognisable and reminiscent representation of the self but, more importantly, also as a reflection of certain aspects of the self. To Bartsch (1996:2), the human fascination with the mirror, and therefore a reflection or representation of the self, has become a symbolic representation of the philosophical scrutiny of self-knowledge. The reflection of certain aspects of the nomadic and postmodern self, or its environment, add to the understanding of identity and is useful in the establishment of a nomadic becoming.

Whereas a reflection is optimised, the reproduction of the self can be viewed as a virtual copy of the self. This virtual copy has reference to the simulacrum, because it is so close to the original that it is with uncertainty that we identify the original. According to Pierre Lévy (1998:39), a virtual transmittance of the self does not only show a visual

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[1] Dr Benjamin Genocchio is a lecturer in Art History and Theory at the Power Institute of Fine Arts, The University of Sydney.

resemblance but more importantly, it shows a quasi-presence. Durham (1998:3) argues that:

> If the term *simulacrum* has become a key word, even a slogan, in discussions of culture after modernism, it is because it would seem to authorise the critic to relate the disparate elements of that culture as so many instances of a single aesthetic and interpretive problem: that of the image which, having internalised its own repetition, calls into question the authority and legitimacy of its model

In the above-mentioned quotation, Durham questions the legitimacy of the model, and not the legitimacy of the product. The question of legitimacy Durham (1998:3) speaks of is a discourse that frequently occurs in the evaluation of reality and virtual reality. In this sense, the virtual self and the true/actual self is not in competition with each other, but as Levy (1998:16) argues, there exist a heterogenic relationship between the virtual and the actual. In the question about legitimacy, the virtual and the real are deconstructed as the so-called "true original". It may instinctively be answered by arguing that the real world is undoubtedly the original. However, theorists like Baudrillard (1996:9) refer to the virtual as a legitimate new by-product of the real. Baudrillard (1996:11) states: 'All virtual reality is a product of a surgical operation on the real world.' Hence, there is a dynamic relationship between the virtual and the real where these two concepts are not in competition, but rather complement each other. With regard to the relationship between the virtual and the real, Baudrillard (1996:17) further states:

> The happy non-distinction between true and false, between real and unreal, gives way to the simulacrum, which consecrates the unhappy non-distinction between true and false, between the real and its signs, the unhappy, necessarily unhappy destiny of meaning in our culture.

In terms of the simulacrum, the definitive distinctions between the true self and the virtual self become blurred, as the one is a simulation of the other and it is not clear which is the original. According to Katherine Hayles (1996:9), 'the simulacrum gives a sense of being a copy because it replicates a pattern, but in the absence of a referent it becomes a copy without an original.'

In *Basel Vein Flows* (2002) (Figure 16) by Stephen Hobbs the manifestation of a simulated image with the absence of a referent is observed. The work includes photographs that reflect the street life in Basel as it is reflected onto the metal surface of a

tram station canopy. These photographs reflect the city dwellers and commuters in Basel as frozen in a moment of their journey. As these photographs are taken from the canopy of a tram station, the title *Basel Vein Flows* refers to the tram as the vein of the city and its activities, and the commuters methodically flow inside the vein (tram) to their destination. Brodie (2004:154) acknowledges Hobbs's fascination with (dys-)functional systems of society and how these systems influence the imperfect urban patterns in culture.

Figure 16:   Stephen Hobbs, *Basel Vein Flow(s)* (2002).
Hand printed colour photographs, 175cm x 75cm each.
(Perryer 2004:155).

Stephen Hobbs's *Basel Vein Flows* (2002) (Figure 16) supports Durham's argument that culture is simulated because it shows that urban patterns are repeated time and again. In

addition to this, the connection that *Basel Vein Flows* (2002) (Figure 16) has with the simulacra is rooted in the idea that urban patterns may be simulated, but at no specific moment in history is the reflection in these canopies exactly the same. The work then exists as a copy of something that has no ultimate original and it may be as closely simulated to an earlier event that it may almost seem an exact copy of an earlier urban pattern.

To say that society exists as a simulacrum of an earlier urban pattern, is to say that it remembers how preceding societies did things in urban environments. Although based on a pattern and routine of an earlier society, the simulations that individuals adopt from previous societies are those that suit the present-day cultural demands the best. Not only does this aspect of Hobbs's work connect to nomadism, but it also refers to movement and transportation in everyday urban surroundings and strengthens the notion of nomadic consciousness.

Hobbs's work allows the viewer to interpret it as a reflection or simulation of cultural existence. Because the context of this work is so closely linked to public transport, it resembles a place where people from different cultures come together, a place where distinctions disappear and transportation is facilitated. To Williamson and Jamal (1999:43), Hobbs's work is concerned with the grey areas in culture, in other words, with what seems to be the same everyday (simulated), but what is actually very different to ever before. It then becomes a grey area, or the border between the real and the virtual, between a reflection and a re-enactment of an earlier reflection.

One can ask if the photographs above represent the true self or the virtual self as they simultaneously reflect the true and virtual self. The image originated due to the presence of the true self, as well as the presence of a medium by which it was duplicated which shows the simulation inherent to culture and urban patterns. Not only does it show the multiplying of the self, but also the multiplying of the habits and manners of the self to establish a nomadic identity in a postmodern culture.

The act of a reflection in a mirror (or any other reflective surface) is the duplication of what is positioned in front of it. If an individual looks into the mirror, the individual will see a duplication of themselves in the mirror. The individual is present in front of the

mirror and also present in the surface of the mirror as a reflection. However, Taylor (1992:177) argues that presence always carries a trace of absence and herein we can identify the nomadic idea of movement – where you are present at the moment, you may be absent in the future.

Braidotti (2002:199) supports the idea that the nomad's connection with constantly being on the move (between two places or between presence and absence) is connected with a process of becoming. The meaning of the nomad's journey lies in different domains of identity as she refers to not only the concept that the nomad is on a journey in search thereof, but also reaches different destinations (some only temporarily) in this journey (Braidotti 2002:199).

In addition to the nomad's travelling existence, Lévy (1998:37) acknowledges that transportation, the multiplicity of the self as in Hobbs's *Basel Vein Flow* (2002) (Figure 16) *s*, is evident in virtualisation. Individuals seem to exist in two places at once: simultaneously in the real and in the virtual picture plane of the mirror or other reflective surfaces. It is in this realisation that the self can be multiplied that the notion of the virtual body is developed. The origins of the representation of the self as a virtual body is primarily traced to the televisual representation of the self, as Lévy (1998:39) explains:

> The projection of the image of the body is generally associated with the notion of telepresence. But telepresence is always something more than just the projection of the image. The telephone, for example, already functions as a telepresence device. It does not merely convey an image or representation of the voice; it carries that voice. The telephone separates voice (the audible body) from the tangible body and transmits it to a remote location. My tangible body is here, my audible body, doubled, is both here and there.

In the telemedia, the self can be multiplied (by being transmitted) from the real into a virtual space and the self exists in both locations. Such transmittance or progression from one place to another echoes the concept of the nomad who can adapt its identity and thoughts to the requirements of the environment. Although the physical journey of the nomad is not a virtual transmittance, it can be compared in the sense that virtual transmittance, just as nomadic transgression, has to cross borders to come about. Seidler (1998:28) believes that this virtual space, in which a multiplied version of the individual also exists due to transgression of borders, is not a space in which an individual can hide,

but it is rather a space in which the individual can learn more about themselves. Similarly, the space in which a nomad exists serves as a learning process to acquire means of adaption to a constantly changing world in which the nomad needs to travel between borders.

Both nomadic travels and transgression into virtual environments can be connected with the self's investigation into an ever-changing and ever-evolving identity. This is not only due to curiosity, but because the nomad is in search of knowledge. To Holmes (1997:12), the technological advancement that brought forth virtual reality in a computerised sense is all about a search for, or rather an expansion of, knowledge. This expansion of knowledge includes the realisation that the simulated postmodern self is fragmented and how these fragments can also be a simulation of the self. Additionally, fragments, or dimensions of the self can fit into one another to show the self as a simulated entity that is splintered in terms of nomadic travel as well as virtual simulation of the self.

A psychoanalytical model of the formation of the self where fragmentation occurs is Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. Lacan formulated this theory in supplementation of Freud's earlier writings (Levin 1992:195). According to Lacan's psychoanalytical theory, the mirror stage is the point in an infant's life when he/she recognises him/herself in the mirror, and thus achieves consciousness of him/herself (Roudinesco 1997:81). In this theory, an individual's consciousness about him/herself develops when he/she realises that the mirror shows a representation of the self and that, although viewed in fragments, he/she is not a fragmented entity, and therefore the development of a permanent structure of subjectivity. In his paper *The topic of the imaginary*, Lacan (1988:79) maintains the following about the mirror-stage:

> This is the original adventure through which man, for the first time, has the experience of seeing himself, of reflecting himself and conceiving of himself as other than he is – an essential dimension of the human, which entirely structures his fantasy, and/or experimental life.

In the development of the fantasy, or the experimental life, lies a connection with the transgression between the borders of the real and the virtual as the experience allows the belief that one can exist as an entity with otherness. Lacan (2001:28) acknowledges that the props that the child sees in the background of the reflection may also help the child

recognise the reflection as a reflection of the self and not as an unknown human being as the props may be already known to the child. The flat surface of the mirror, which the child usually touches during this process, also helps with this unconscious realisation because an infant knows that human beings are not flat (Roudinesco 1997:112). Prior to this realisation, the infant perceives him/herself as fragmented as he/she literally sees him/herself as consisting of bits and pieces.

The infant depends greatly on other human beings, usually a primary caregiver. When the mirror reflects something that the infant recognises as the caregiver and the infant realises that the mirror is showing a reflection of the self (and a caregiver), Lacan (2001:49) argues that the infant forms a trigonometric consciousness of the self. He (Lacan 2001:49) goes on to say that, dependent on the nature of the infant's first encounter with the self, the contingent consciousness of the self is strengthened (Lacan 2001:49). Postinfantile *Angst* is a stage in this process that 'occurs after the infant's realisation that the reflection in front of him is a reflection of the self (Gallop 1985:43). By acknowledging the reflection as the self, and thus the infant's formation of a consciousness of the self, the infant unconsciously recognises the danger of regressing to this earlier stage where the self-concept is one where the self is seen as fragmented again.

The use of the mirror in psychoanalytic theory is common; Ramachandran and Hirstein (1999:100-101) state that reflections in mirrors add to an individual's sense of self and how he/she exist in a multi-layered culture. In addition, the mirror can also represent the self by means of a reflection. Laycock (1999:395) considers reflections to be a metaphorical portrayal of identity, as well as a scientific phenomenon where a "copy of what we look like" becomes known. A reflection of the self becomes not only a duplication of the self, but also a symbol for a quasi-reproduction of the true essence of the self, both on an emotional and spiritual level and on a physical level (Lycock 1999:397).

In my own work, *Dimensional Identity* (2007) (Figure 17), the fragmented self is conveyed by literally layering multiple dimensions thereof to show the self as a unity. As a product of digital manipulation, the recognisable facial constructs were transformed in flat planes or fragments that can also represent contours of the facial features. These fragments of the self show the self to exist as an entity, but an entity that consists of

different fragments or layers. It also refers to postmodern culture, because postmodern culture is also multi-layered and multi-dimensional. These fragments can also refer to geographical contours and geographical spaces and strengthens the construction of postcolonial identity that is inherent to this work.

Figure 17:   Estie Serfontein, *Dimensional Identity,* (2007).
Laser cut Perspex 1800mm x 1800mm.
Photograph by the author.

Within the context of the economic, social, cultural and political forces of the postmodern age, a strong focus in globalist art-making is how the individual's identity fits into the international platform (D'Amato 1999:43). Although this statement is not only applicable to South African art-making, D'Amato (1999:43) argues that it is more evident in South African visual culture as the fight for identity is more apparent in South African history and present discourses. Williamson (1999:36) refers to the 'new consciousness' that

developed in South African culture as a result of the search for a peaceful, but structured, hybrid identity. The 'new consciousness' developed into a 'culture of liberation' as it does not only incorporate different cultural views, but also different influences and methods of creating visual comment on the 'new consciousness' (Williamson 1999:37).

Dimensional Identity (2007) (Figure 17) was produced by using industrial materials (Perspex) and processes (computerised and mechanical laser cutting techniques). The outlines of these fragments were laser cut in Perspex to fit perfectly into one another. Thereafter, the different fragments were elevated from a Perspex base by different lengths of acrylic rods. This resulted in a three-dimensional representation of the fragmented self, but it also shows the different layers and dimensions in which the self can be portrayed. As the Perspex has a reflective quality, these layers reflect each other, strengthening the dimensional reflection of the self as simultaneously reflecting the surroundings and implying an investigation into identity.

D'Amato (1999:46) refers to the artist's obligation to reflect social, political, racial, sexual and economical structures in an individual's culture and to comment on how they are integrated into one another. With regard to the specific role of the South African contemporary artist, D'Amato (1999:46) argues:

> As the South African artist sorts through the opportunities of postmodern discourses, with their focus on shifting identities, histories, and nations, a combination of the resistance aesthetic and the so-called 'new formation' becomes relevant in that it creates a place for these artists in the global art community while preserving their ability to effect change in their local visual culture.

In *Dimensional Identity* (2007) (Figure 17) the intricate placement of sections that resemble the self shows that all these aspect of culture (and oneself) exist in a placement that does not only fit perfectly into each other, but also shows the importance of giving authority to some of these cultural aspects. The formation of the culture and the representations of culture can contribute to the social identity of the postmodern individual.

Parallel with the idea that the self can be duplicated as a simulation, is the idea that these duplications or simulations of the self can be reproduced endlessly. Almost like an echo of the self where one simulation produced a range of multiplicities of the self that

suggests the self to be in motion. In Bridget Baker's *Whether I'm Stuck,* (2000) (Figure 18), the intricate placement of objects in a space refers to the simulation of the self as an echo and shown as almost endless in the reproduction thereof.

Figure 18:   Bridget Baker, *Whether I'm Stuck* (2000).
Installation with photos and binoculars, dimensions unknown.
Installation view: Bielefeld, Germany.
(Perryer 2004:41).

According to Murinik (2004:38), Baker concerned herself with an intimate study of the self during a three-month residency in Germany in which this work was completed. *Whether I'm Stuck* (2000) (Figure 18) shows a multiple depiction of the self in progress – the self seems to be walking down a flight of stairs through the camera lens. The technique and process thereof that was used to achieve the visual product in the work reminds strongly of the late 1800 photographic experiments of Eadweard Muybridge. Muybridge experimented with photographing animals and humans in motion to show movement as a visual sequence of photographs (Hill 2001:3).

Muybridge's early experiments included the photographing of horses and, more specifically, to investigate whether horses have all four feet o the ground when galloping (Hill 2001:4). In the first experiments, the setting was surrounded by a number of cameras in order to take different photographs at different stages of the horse's movement (Taft 1995:2).

His later sequential motion photographs included experiments where humans carrying different weights, moving at different paces and in different directions, for example climbing or descending a staircase. The direction and speed of the movement and the weight carried, influenced the posture and placement of the figure (Taft 1995:3). Hill (2001:4) argues that the Muybridge's technique did not only produce a product where insight in movement was exposed, but also a very early version of the motion picture. In all Muybridge's work, the self is shown as an entity progressing from one position to another, but with different positions in between to explain and support the progress.

In *Whether I'm Stuck* (2000) (Figure 18), the self is not only shown in progress, but also in search of a destination as if the self is displaced. Furthermore, the work also marks an unknown space – it is not entirely clear whether this space is in a gallery or an ancient ruin. This adds to the uncertainty of where both the nomad and the viewers are. According to Williamson (1999:39), Baker is concerned with the study of identity and the processing of personal problems through her art and performance. As in most of Baker's pieces incorporate extensive handiwork like embroidery or knitting, *Whether I'm Stuck* (2000) (Figure 18) shows the use of domestic handiwork in the use of buttons. The almost obsessive repetitiveness is echoed in the reproduction of the self that is printed onto the buttons. Although it does not show the exact same image, but consecutive stills from a video, there is the impression of an obsessive approach to issues of identity.
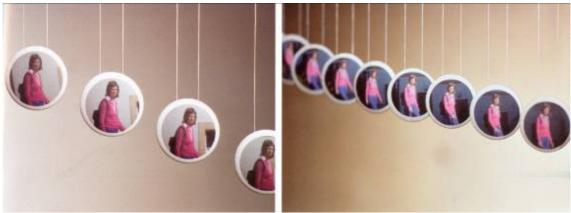
Figure 19:   Bridget Baker, Detail of *Whether I'm Stuck.* (2000).
Installation with photos and binoculars, dimensions unknown.
Installation view: Bielefeld, Germany.
(Perryer 2004:41).

The buttons hang in a semi-spiral from the ceiling in a flowing rhythm. The flowing sequence of the movement in which the self is shown to be in rhythmic movement is disturbed when viewed through the binoculars provided as only parts of the sequence can be viewed at once. At the top of the spiral, Baker is seen entering the picture plane and assertively looking into the lens for four stills before looking away (Murinik 2004:38). This movement in the fragmented sequence of the self being in progress supports the idea of fluidity in identity as the self is in gradual motion. No destination of the self is indicated and the self stays fragmented and displaced in this work – there is no reunion for the self as a unity.

The lack of unity in this work is extended by the investigation into the deliberate use of shadows. The lights are placed in this environment according to the specifications of the artist (Murinik 2004:38). The work casts two distinctive rows of shadows on the wall and this strengthens the idea of displacement as the shadows and the actual work cooperate with the environment to convey a multiple and reproduced displaced self. The top shadow fades to the bottom of the work, but indicates a direction in which the viewer can complete the imaginary shadow.

Williamson (1999:41) stresses the idea that Baker's pieces can be read as a universal reflection of efforts to overcome past problems, because she works from the personal to the general. The obsessive efforts in Baker's work can also be efforts to overcome fragmentation in identity due to Baker's upbringing in which she had various traumatic experiences (Kellner 1999:144).

Duplication of the self with regards to a reflective or virtual copy of the self showed that the postmodern and postcolonial self is not only simulated, but also fragmented. This fragmentation is not a threat to the establishment of a nomadic identity, but can contribute to the idea that the self is progressing, or in motion. The simulation of the self then exists as a product of fragmentation of the postmodern self. This brings us to the discussion that the simulation of the self can also produce the fragmentation of the self.

3.3 Fragmentation of the self through simulation

Although mirrors and reflection produce fragmented ideas about the self that can also be viewed as a simulation of the self, a simulation by means of reflection also indicate fragmentation. There is a constant referral between fragmentation and simulation, the original postmodern self and the simulation or copy thereof. This adds to the idea that the construction of identity – and the concept of the self – is a nomadic concept as it stays fluid and is always in motion.

Although any reflection promises a fulfilling presence of mostly the self, the artwork *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror* (1975) (Figure 20) by Michelangelo Pistoletto, illustrates the terrifying emptiness that can accompany a reflection. The title of this work, *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror* (1975) (Figure 20), refers to the simultaneous dividing and multiplying of spatial aspects. From a practical point of view, this work consists of a mirror that is cut in half and strategically placed in the corner of a gallery wall. The space between the two components is well considered; the space is just big (or small) enough to allow a visual play with dimensions that suggests that the surface of the mirror is non-existent and the space is extended to the back where the reflection of the frame tricks us in believing the multiplication of the spatial aspects.

Figure 20: Michaelangelo Pistoletto, *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror*, (1975).
Mirror glass and wood frame, two elements of 150cm x 150cm each.
Collection: The Menil Collection, Houston.
(Gianelli 1988:165).

In *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror -The Divided Table* (1979) (Figure 21) which was created four years after *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror* (1975), Pistoletto shows the brutal honesty of the mirror yet again.

Figure 21: Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror (The Divided Table)*, (1979).
Mirror glass and wood frame, L: 30cm x 52cm R: 30cm x 52cm.
Collection: Collection of the artist.
(Taylor 1992:176).

The pieces of the divided table are situated in such a way that they reflect fragmented images that do not resemble representations of the self. Although not resembling the self, they reflect architectural elements from the space in which the work exists. These elements can resemble cultural identity and the fragmentation thereof. In one surface of the reflection a doubling of a fragment of the floor on which it is displayed is visible. Another fragment's reflection shows parts of a building that may be across from the open window which the fragment of the divided table was placed in front of. With regard to this work, Pistoletto (in Taylor 1992:289) wrote:

> We plunge into a black hole where identity hurries and shatters into a
> thousand fragments … . Hence, our identities are diverse, and they follow

impulses and moments; they change according to the events and the course of development; they draw a portrait made of so many mosaic tiles, personality images, so many of which can be discovered in the course of a life.

The rendered fragments of identity and the shattered identities Pistoletto identifies in his art illustrate that the self can manifest as a splintered entity. Although splintered, the fragments can be connected to each other again to reveal the diversity that can be identified in a multi-dimensional and fragmented self. It is important to note that all these fragments are similar and can be grouped together to construct the self as a whole again.

For Celant (1988:16), there is a continuous flow of images between the dimensions of reality and the doubling thereof in Pistoletto's work. Celant (1988:18-19) argues that the human being is represented in images that are constantly travelling between the renewing experience of discovery of the self and the nothingness of the universe. With reference to nomadic identity, the flow between the renewing experience and the nothingness of the universe shows the journey that the self undertakes. This journey is undertaken to make sense of how its different fragments and dimensions fit into each other to allow the self to exist as a unit. In Pistoletto's work (Figure 20 & 21), the artist shows the ambiguity that is inherent to self-investigation as it simultaneously shows the fragments and dimensions of reflections and how these can be combined to create a newly formed entity.

My own work, *Woven identity* (2007) (Figure 22), shows how fragments and reflections can be combined to form a metaphor of the self. The artist plays with the idea that a representation of the self is a reflection of an individual's cultural identity. Because we live in a mulit-cultural and postcolonial society, a representation of the self that reflects cultural identity is never a simple representation, but consists of different aspects and fragments. Because the work investigates the cultural identity that reflects onto the postmodern individual, hence it is also an inquiry into identity of the self. The reference to fragments and different aspects can also refer to the multiple aspects in identity that the postmodern individual owns.

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Figure 22: Estie Serfontein, *Woven identity* (2007).
Rubber, cable ties and laser engraved mirrors. 850 mm x 1500mm.
Photograph by the author.

The work consists of a base woven from rubber strands kept in place by knotting the rubber strands together, as well as tying the rubber strands to each other with cable ties. This contributes to the structure of the work as its dimensions are controlled by the careful distribution of the cable ties. It resembles strains or fragments of a similar origin that belong together and are intricately put together and constructed as a process that ends in a metaphor for identity of the self and identity of culture. With reference to the South African society, Jamal (2005:71) states:

> Fragmented at the core, it would attempt to give up the ghost in favour of an international cultural imaginary that, all the more, would fracture its already fragmented self.

Jamal (2005:70) also suggests that the fragmentation inherent to societies can be fatal to society if no attempts are put in place to carefully combine all the fragments into a new hybrid in society. *Woven Identity* (2007) (Figure 22) suggests the cohering of fragments in society, which homogenate and forms a structured society.

To further consider the idea of coherent combination as explained above, eight photographic representations of the artist in the form of laser engraving on mirrors are

attached to the rubber base. The technological process of laser engraving can differentiate between no more than four nuances of a monochrome image. Upon experimenting with engraving on mirrors the artist discovered that any mirror consist of three layers painted onto clear glass, thus mirrors have four layers. Hence, the mirror then becomes the perfect canvas for laser engraving as no layer is wasted or over-used and the four layers (or nuances) of the image can be clearly distinguished. This includes a sand-blasting effect on the clear glass layer.

When turned around, the mirrors show only a two-tone image of the representation of the self, but the reflective quality of the surface remains intact. The representations of the self act as simulations of the self because the representations are reproduced onto another surface. The aspect of simulation is strengthened in the work in two mirrors that have their reflective side facing the viewer. The simulations that are presented in this piece are only fragments of the self, but fragments that are combined and structured to simultaneously optimise the fragments and the unity that they form.

There is also a paradox in this work. The highly industrial materials and processes that are used are applied in a very personal matter of an inquiry into the self and its identity. This paradox does not displace the concept of the self into a vast and confusing environment of fragments, but it demonstrates the ability of the postmodern self to make sense of these fragments and displacements that exist in postmodern society. The same logical fragmental displacement that exist in a postmodern (and postcolonial) society is evident in Rodney Place's *Bread City Streetwear – Unnamed Immigrant (with mirror)* (2002) (Figure 23) below. However, the focus in Place's work is on the fragmentation in cultural displacement present in the postcolonial self.

Figure 23:   Rodney Place, *Bread City Streatwear – Unnamed Immigrant (with mirror)* (2002)
Mixed Media: screen and stencil printed garments, mirror. 2000mm x 700mm.
Collection: Unknown
(Nuttal 2006:334).

Rodney Place is interested in the aesthetics of the African diaspora and how it contributes to the self as being a metaphor for the fragmented and simulated identity of the self. The work consists of a wearable garment that has imprints of African buildings in a grid. The garment hangs from a hanger-like structure that has a mirror strategically placed so the viewer can see a simulation of him/herself as part of the work. As part of series, this work is the only work that features a mirror. The rest of the work's portraiture entails photographs of immigrants that Place met in Johannesburg in the same position than this work's mirror. To Nuttal (2006:4) this work marks the emergence of a proper global epistemology of global beauty and ugliness. Place embraced the influences fromm other

African countries that came to light with the African diaspora to create a work that shows a unity in identity, but simultaneously the fragments of culture that contributed to the construction of a simulated and nomadic identity.

Place (2006:335) acknowledges the influence that West African fashion, and specifically traditional garments worn in Senegal, had on this work. He also refers to the realisation that the beautiful traditional garments are in contrast to the wretched environment in which it is traditionally worn (Place 2006:335). In addition, Place refers to the contrast of immigrants he met in Johannesburg city centre and the need to embrace the fragmentation that is produced by these contrasts (Place 2006:336). *Bread City Streetwear – Unnamed Immigrant (with mirror)* (2002) (Figure 23) does not only act as a metaphor for this fragmentation on culture and identity, but also illustrates the displacement inherent to it.

3.4 Displacement of the reflected and simulated self

Although a reproduction in a mirror is a simple reproduction of the self, it exists as a simulated product of reality and may then be seen as a hyper-reality. The mirror then duplicates the real self to show a hyper-real, or virtual self as a simulation of the real self. The reflection is not merely a duplication of the self, but a metaphor for the displacement of the self as the individual is not entirely here, nor there and not sure where exactly they are in the processes of reflection. The placement of the self becomes displaced and misplaced.

With regard to looking in a mirror, Foucault (1998:158) states:

> I see myself where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am not over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself where I am absent, to see my virtual self as a replica of my true self. The mirror becomes a metaphor for this border between the virtual and true self.

The real self is the tangible self and the individual will never see itself if the reproduced virtual self in the mirror is not acknowledged to be a replica of the real self. The simulated self in the mirror, which can be referred to as the other, is not the self in the truest sense of the self, becomes a medium by which individuals investigate their true selves in a

temporal sense. To a certain extent, the simulated self in the mirror shows a replica of the self and there is no othering in this idea. Because the simulation of the self is in a different space (on the surface of the mirror), the self acknowledges the 'unreal' self-ness towards the reflection. It is in this displacement of the self into a virtual space that the self becomes it's oppositional other, but with an underlying quasi-presence of the self.

The mirror acts as a medium through which the self is doubled or reproduced into another self, therefore displaced from its origin. The reproduced self is removed from the true (original) self to allow the original self to investigate the reproduced self. The mirror as medium of reproduction then acts as the border between the two selves as it separates the original self from the reproduced self and becomes a metaphor for the split between presence and absence. Taylor (1992:281) argues that the space that is created by the separation of the selves from one another is the space in which artworks with reflections become successful.

The reflective surface functions as a recording surface where the doubling of the self takes place or presence and absence are split. According to Taylor (1992:282) this happens because the mirror freezes a fleeting moment in the otherwise continual flow of images. The recording surface then captures fleeting proof of the existence of the self because it acts as a monitor that shows the present. The reflective surface cannot show anything of the past and cannot look into the future – it resembles the present as an honest intermediate stage between the past and the future.

Although as an honest intermediate stage between the past and the future, a reflection in the mirror simultaneously communicate an idea of presence and absence, because we are represented in a place that we are sure we do not exist in. Foucault (1998:158) agrees that we are represented in a place of our absence and Taylor (1992:177) argues that presence always carries a trace of absence.

In Francesca Woodman's *Self-Deceit #1* (1978) (Figure 24), the self is presented on all fours before a mirror. Her image is reflected back at the camera lens as her body turns away from it. She is investigating the idea that she is represented in a space that she does not exist in or is absent from. She simultaneously partially disappears and emerges from the real into the virtual and from the virtual into a real environment (Kent 2006:19).

Although she investigates the border between the virtual and the real, presence and absence, she also experiments with fragmentation and transformation of the self (Kent 2006:18). According to Kent (2006:19) the image speaks of human physicality and its transcendence because of the absence of eye-contact with the viewer. The viewer has very little, or no part in the dialogue of this work as the dialogue is only between the virtual (appearing) and the true (disappearing) selves. In addition to the movement between the virtual and the real, the self is also clearly treated as an apparition in this work. To Sollers (1998:10), the artist's photograph when emerging 'from obscurity, crosses through the mirror and materialises for a moment in a world twisted with anxiety.'
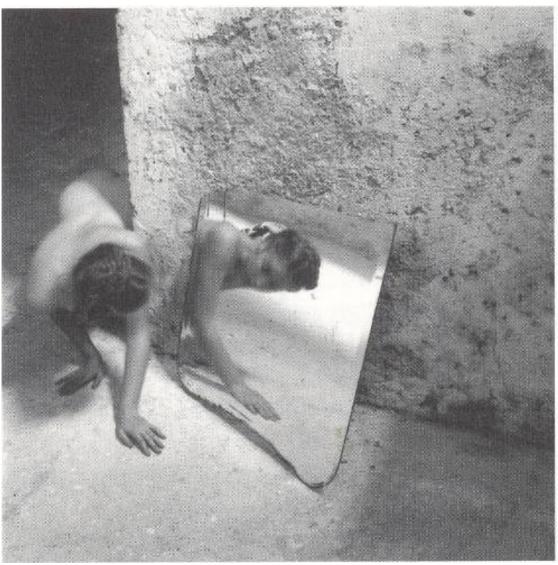

Figure 24:   Francesca Woodman, *Self-Deceit #1* (1978).
Black and white photograph. 10 inches x 8 inches.
Collection: Betty and George Woodman, New York
(Chadwick 1998: 168).

Photographed while she crawls around a corner to discover her reflection in a strategically placed mirror on the ground this work also speaks of the displacement of the self as the self exists in two places at once. With reference to the myth of Narcissus, Lacan (2001:45) states that the formulation of an individual's ego (self-concept) is rooted in the moment when the true self realises that it is looking at a virtual replica of the self.

Woodman merely investigates the truth about her reflection as she is shown in a space which is stripped from nostalgia and other props which will add idiosyncratic meaning to the artwork (Posner 1998:168). The figure seems to be displaced, and almost lost in a sort of labyrinth, but when she notices her own reflection, a sense of familiarity is portrayed that points to the play between presence and absence. This adds to the notion that the virtual is a space where individuals do not exist or feel at home, but reference to familiar aspects or the quasi-presence that can be found in the virtual.

Baudrillard (1998:268) acknowledges the virtual and the real worlds as oppositions and argues that 'there is no sort of necessary or natural transition from the one to the other.' When engaging in the investigation into reflections as a virtual replica of the real, oppositions such as virtual and real, self and other are encountered. The subject-object relationship is another interesting play between oppositions that are produced by the space that exists between the two selves. In *Self-Deceit #1* (1978) (Figure 24) there is a depiction of the objectifying of the self (subject). As this is a self portrait, the subject here is the self, but the way in which it is duplicated into a flat surface where the self does not exist, portrays the replica of the self as an object.

Hayles (1996:9) acknowledges Baudrillard's view that the hyper-real emerges when the chain of displacements connecting a series of imitations (or simulations) of an original becomes so attenuated and reproduced that the original does not carry weight any more. In *Self-Deceit #1* this becomes evident as it is possible to question the origin of the simulation. Because both representations of the self seem so believable that we almost accept it as the real self, the borders between the object and the referent, or the real and the hyper-real becomes blurred because we are not sure which is the true original and which the imitation. Apart from the dependency of presence and absence, the hyper-real brings forward an idea of trace and memories as a simulation has a predecessor and original that can be remembered.

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Similarly to the tele-presence of oneself in a simulated virtual picture plane, dreams and memories carry a trace of reality. Because there is a constant cross-reference between the real and the simulated self, traces of the real self exist in the simulation thereof and the traces of the simulated self with regards to the real self. The same can be said about the link to nomadic identity and the interplay between the abovementioned oppositions as nomadism embraces the flow of ideas.

Dreams are often described as dissociated states of consciousness (Barrett 1996:68). According to Barrett (1996:68) there is a lack of continuity in the waking experience because at that moment the individual is confused about the distinction between reality and the dream. The dream, as well as reality, can be embedded in the individual's memory as this creates confusion between reality and the dream because both are remembered. Just as the borders between the true self and the virtual self become blurred in a simulation, dreams and memories can be a simulation of one another. Because both dreams and reality exist in the memory, the individual can be seen as displaced between memory and the dream. The same can be said about the space between the real and the virtual and the displacement of oneself between these concepts refer to the progression inherent to nomadism.

Memories of traumatic events are often disregarded by the unconscious mind as an unpleasant dream (Belicki & Cuddy 1996:48) and may manifest as a reminder when re-occurring dreams are experienced. In the discussion of dreams and memories, there is a certain level of displacement as the borders between the two often become blurred because dreams can be believable as they may be a simulation of the real. Trauma that has resulted in displacement, physically or psychologically, contributes to the displacement of reality between dreams and memories. Whereas memories have a tele-presence of the self and are connected to the real, the dream also has a tele-presence of the real and can be argued as a simulation thereof.

In most cases, the unconscious self controls the nomadic journey for the displaced individual between sense and confusion or memories and dreams. Nevertheless, in the work of the Cuban artist, Ana Mendieta, it becomes apparent that she is simulating her struggle with her forced displacement in the form of exile at the age of 12. According to Genocchio (2000:15) an 'intense vein of self-obsession, largely as a consequence of a

traumatic childhood experience, resulting in an almost exclusive production of self-portraits' is evident in almost all Mendieta's work. The process inherent to the production of this artwork induced Mendieta to engage in environmental sculptures, performances and site-specific installations in which she used her body to draw attention to process of ideas rather that the result of the process (Genocchio 2000:18).

Figure 25: Ana Mendieta, *Untitled* from *Silueta (silhouette)* Series (1976).
Site-specific installation on La Ventosa beach (Mexico) with red tempera, dimensions unknown.
(Viso 2004:34).

Mendieta's feelings of displacement are evident in her works, which express her political fight against racist oppression, but also have a strong reference to nomadic identity. This is seen in the *Silueta* series (Viso 2004:24). The images in this series (one of which is shown in Figure 25) show the complexity with which Mendieta uses her own body to simultaneously convey the object and the subject, reality and dream. The series reflect a search for her place in the world, but also serve as an expression of her elementary relationship with nature and the female form. She conveys her body as a temporary element of nature to form a synthesis between the form of her body and the actions that took place to create this series (Herzberg 2004:139).

The imprint (or simulation) of the body in her *Silueta* series becomes a mechanism by which societies understand themselves and the history that preceded the present (Roulet 2004:227). In other words, the artist creates a platform on which one can see how societies reflect on the history from which it was born. To strengthen the comment on transience and memory of a fleeting moment, Mendieta placed this imprint of her silhouette in close proximity to the waves so that the water could literally wash all the evidence of the presence of the silhouette away. The installation was just in the right position to the shore that the waves did not reclaim Mendieta's entire imprint at once, but rather in a flowing, calm and prolonged process; just as the construction of identity, the reclaiming of a memory happens as a process and individuals remember events in sequences.

The imprint was coloured with red pigment that spread with the movement of the waves. The original image of the silhouette becomes only a memory or trace, until no existing evidence of the silhouette remains. The imprint of the silhouette also becomes a metaphor for memory, as it is the only reference to the original form that exists in the installation and documentation thereof. Mendieta draws the viewers to the water's edge and forces them to be confronted by the outline of her silhouette that becomes a trace of her body's existence. This outline as a trace of the self appears and disappears as the tide ebbs and flows. To Genocchio (2000:19) the outlined silhouette represents a metaphor for a territorial boundary or border that signifies the oppression of cultural and personal identity and the memory thereof.

Because Mendieta worked with the combination of the body and nature as her primary media, she often faced the dilemma of capturing the fleeting qualities of time-based, ephemeral actions in documentary forms (Rifkin 2004:11). Genocchio (2000:15-27) acknowledges the connection between Mendieta's work and the Protean body, as her work has subtle reference to the body's ability to adapt in different circumstances. Viso (2004:35) refers to Mendieta's description of culture as the 'memory of history' and supports Mendieta's viewpoint that the 'body is perhaps the primary metaphor for a society's perception of itself.' In addition to this, the artist describes her art as a way in which culture can be conceptualised and history and the past are depicted as mere memories (Viso 2004:35).

To simultaneously emphasise the reclaiming of the body, and the disappearance of the body, Mendieta placed red tempera in the imprint. The tempera colours the water and the sand as the evidence of the work begins to flow with the tide into the sea (Brett 2004:194). This leaves a trace of the body imprint on the beach, which gradually fades as a metaphor for the way in which memories and dreams fade away. To Viso (2004:21) the aspect of remembrance of the history as a memory in Mendieta's work refers to the conflict in her bicultural identities. Viso (2004:21) argues that she remembers her original cultural heritage (Cuban) and exists in a very different culture (American), and that this influences her work to shows fragmentation and different dimensions of identity.

Mendieta's *oeuvre* may be interpreted as a metaphoric exploration of the levels of self-knowledge and thus an awareness of essential truths of being within herself also present within all human beings. This awareness often manifests as a fleeting image in Mendieta's work, and may be a result of the act of remembrance. To Sabbatino (1996:135), the manifestation of remembrance is central to all the works in the *Silueta* series (1976), but the erasure of the permanence of this specific work strengthens the idea that an individual's construction of identity is influenced by the individual's memories.

Although deeply rooted in her own history, her own displacement of identity, and her own memory of history, Mendieta's work also show the desire to connect with a wider collective heritage. Mendieta's work is undeniably Protean as she comments on present-day culture, her own displaced cultural identity and how she had to adapt to hybridity in culture. The artist comments on identity as fluid and ever-changeable, therefore it can be

argued that her work has reference to nomadic consciousness because it comments on the space between certain oppositions like real and virtual, memories and dreams, destination and origin.

Closing

In this chapter, the establishment of the self as nomadic was demonstrated by refereeing to the multi-dimensional and fragmented self and how we can overcome the splintering in identity in postcolonial cultures. All the fragments of the self and postmodern culture are structured to be connected to each other in order to support the presence of stability in the sense of self. In the discussion of dimensions of the self, it is argued that there is a combination between abstraction and figuration in the sense that these two oppositions contribute to the new hybridity in cultural identity of the postmodern individual.

As postcolonial nomads, we are not fully aware of the mutation or metamorphosis of our own identity when it takes on a new form. It would seem that we have become so accustomed to the increasing demands of nomadic thought that the Protean and nomadic manifestations in our identity happens as an automatic response to external cultural demands.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

In the investigation into postcolonial nomadism and the simulated self in images of fragmented identity in this study, it has been argued that the depiction of fluidity in identity in contemporary artworks is undeniably due to the onset of globalisation and the decline of colonialism and cultural borders. The study demonstrated that our present-day cultural surroundings in South Africa and most cultural spaces worldwide have become increasingly diverse and multi-cultural.

It was further demonstrated that multi-culturalism promotes a strong presence of fragmentation and hybridity in personal identity and that global conditions such as nomadism contribute to the creation of diaspora through the transnational crossing of cultural borders and cultural fusion. Reference was made to theorists like Venn (2006) and Castle (2001) who believe that postmodern culture has become hybridised due to the rapid fusion of different cultures into one another. It has been argued that postcolonial aspects such as diaspora, the development of multi-cultural societies and globalism contribute to such fusion.

In addition it has been argued that the diasporic individual adapts its identity according to the requirements of new cultural spaces and takes on a nomadic identity. The identity of the postcolonial self thus becomes a product or a reflection of the individual's global environment. It has been demonstrated that the postmodern self manifests fluidity in identity being multi-dimensional, fragmented, morphing and always in motion, adapting and developing. The Protean model of identity, as theorised by Robert Lifton was useful in illuminating fluidity and adaptability in identity formation. The concept of the nomad signals the relinquishment and deconstruction of any sense of fixed identity and the ever-moving concept of the nomad can be connected with the everlasting necessity for change (Braidotti 2001:2-3) which shows a strong resemblance between nomadic thought and Proteanism.

In these manifestations, multiplicity of the self, dislocation and displacement of the self and the self as a virtual copy of 'itself' becomes evident.

Just as the self is a simulation of its environment, it has been maintained that self is constantly reproduced and simulated. As such many virtual copies of the self come into being as quasi-presences of the original, but these remain duplications of the self; an argument that is rooted in writings by Levy (1998:39) and Foucault (1998:158). In addition, the fragmented manifestations of postcolonial identity act as the play between presence and absence and between memories and dreams.

The manifestation of the socio-cultural aspects of the postmodern self was not only discussed in images where a reflection of the self became apparent, but also in visual texts that showed fragmentation and displacement of the self. In the artworks that were explored in this study, the mirror becomes the monitor for the fleeting present that can be seen as a transitional space between the real and the virtual; the coherent and the fragmented self; and the authentic and the simulated self. It was argued that a virtual copy of the self has a strong quasi-presence of elements of the 'original' or 'first' self. In several artworks there was evidence of the displaced individual remembering a happier past or dreams of a contented future, being trapped in the present between past and future.

The contribution of this study is twofold: Firstly, the application of the research to a South-African context where the postcolonial aspects of how the self functions in an ever-changing world were explored in a visual cultural context. These included the investigation of postcolonial theory and secondly the means by which these aspects manifest in visual culture. The research led to the identification of visual texts that comment on diversity in culture and depict the multiplication of the self in these contexts. Overall, the study contributes to the illustration and the identification of nomadic consciousness in postmodern culture

The psychoanalytical adaptive models that were investigated allow knowledge to be acquired on how individuals adapt to culture. Although useful to this study, psychological adaptive models were only investigated superficially, but the topic could be extended further in a full-scale psychological research.

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APPENDIX: FINE LINE: A COLLECTION OF ARTWORKS BY ESTIE SERFONTEIN

fine line

a collection of artworks by Estie Serfontein

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname: Serfontein

First name: Estie

Date of birth: 14 March 1982

Current age: 28

Nationality: South African

Gender: Female

City of residence: Pretoria, South Africa

Current employment: Quality Assurance in Aviation

CONTACT DETAILS

Cell phone number: 084 5117 315

Email address: estie@serfontein.co.za

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Name of high school: Die C&N Sekondêre Meisieskool Oranje

City: Bloemfontein

Year matriculated: 2000

RELATED TERTIARY EDUCATION

Name of institution: University of Pretoria

Degree obtained: B.A. (Fine Arts)

Year acquired: 2005

Name of institution: University of Pretoria

Degree registered for: M.A. (Fine Arts)

First year of registration: 2006

HISTORY OF EXHIBITIONS

2010:   Group exhibition, Slot Lovenstein, Bloemfontein

2008:   Group exhibition, Seippel Gallery, Johannesburg

2007:   Solo exhibition, Fried Contemporary, Pretoria

2006:   Group exhibition, Timeless Junxtion, Pretoria.

2006:   Group exhibition for the Chancellor, University of Pretoria.

2005:   Group exhibition for final assessment, University of Pretoria.

2005:   Group exhibition, Alumni Hall, UNW Campus, Potchefstroom

2004:   Group exhibition, Globe gallery, Pretoria

2004:   Departmental group exhibition, University of Pretoria.

2003:   Departmental group exhibition, University of Pretoria.

2002:   Departmental group exhibition, University of Pretoria.

Fine Line comments on the processes involved in constructing and maintaining personal identity in a post-modern and postcolonial world. Within our diverse surroundings, we continuously strive to adapt to the immediate environment; coping with the demands of a changing world.

In the works on exhibition in *Fine Line,* the traces of the journey of identity-making are explored in the context of post-colonialism where cultural borders become blurred. The imagery depicts fragmentation and unity in the search for identity. Supported by various media and experimental techniques, the artist deconstructs the post-modern individual's quest for identity to question our inherent blueprint of identity. Even though we are faced with the dilemma of living in an advanced era where personal identity is overruled by technological advancement, the artist stresses the realisation that our survival mechanism in this demanding time is to maintain adaptability in personal identity. Visual characteristics of the artworks in *Fine Line* show diversity and the combination of organic and technological references, evident in the techniques and materials explored which contribute to the layered diversity of the premise. Unconventional combinations of materials are juxtaposes and superimposed to speak about multiple layers and adaption of personal identity. Materials like rubber, cable ties and mirrors are combined to form a network that serves as a platform for images depicting the unity that can be created from fragmentation in identity.

Although people are from different demographic backgrounds, heritages, cultural identities and traditions, post-modernism's eclectic discourse allow liminal margins in identity. It would seem that it is in the blurring of socio-cultural and existential borders that the post-modern individual finds its identity.

Dimensional Identity
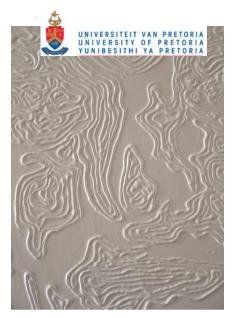1800mm x 1800mm in total (4 panels)
Perspex
2007

Detail of *Dimensional Identity*
1800mm x 1800mm in total (4 panels)
Perspex
2007

Woven Identity
850mm x 1500mm
Rubber, cable ties and mirrors
2007

Textured Identity 1-6
420mm x 300mm (each)
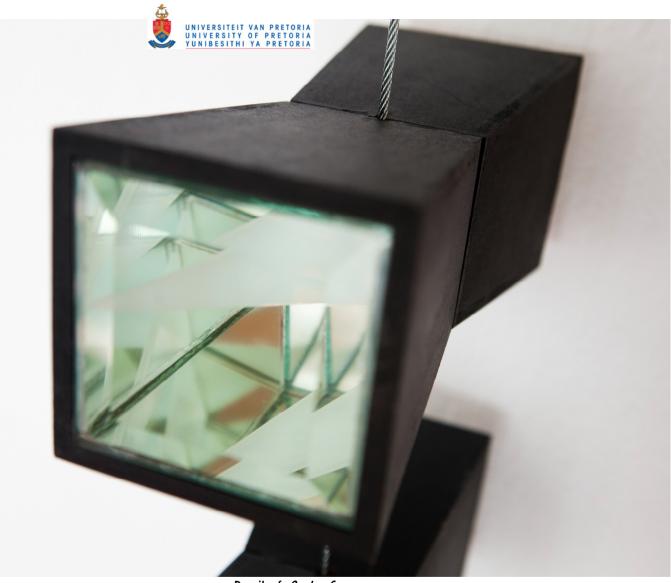Mixed media on canvas
2007 (re-worked in 2009)

Contoured Identity
1200mm x 1500mm (each)
Mixed media on canvas with textured rubber in between
2007

Ocular Symmetry
Dimensions variable
Wood, mirror, steel and glass
2010

Detail of *Ocular Symmetry*
Dimensions variable
Wood, mirror, steel and glass
2010

Fragmented Synergy (Installation view)
Dimensions variable
Vinyl and paper
2010

Detail of *Fragmented Synergy*
Dimensions variable
Vinyl
2010

Detail of *Fragmented Synergy*
Dimensions variable
Vinyl
2010

Urban Labyrinth
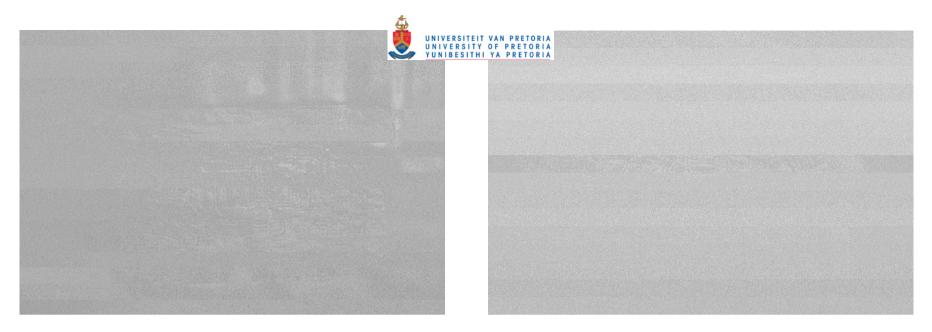Dimensions variable
Perspex, steel and plastic
2010

Detail of *Urban Labyrinth*
Dimensions variable
Perspex, steel and plastic
2010

Perf

orated Identity 1-8 (Installation view)
850mm x 530mm (framed)
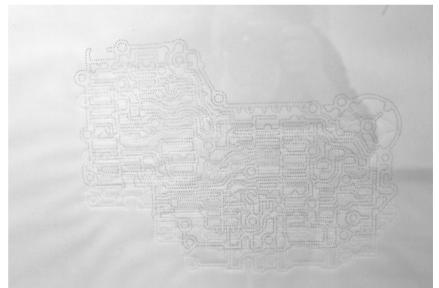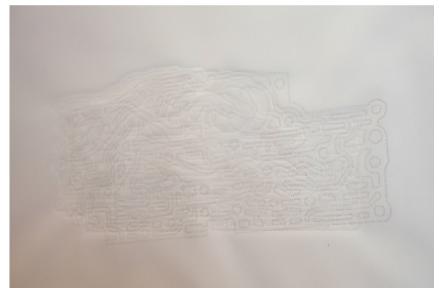Fabriano and Drafting film
2010

Detail of *Perforated Identity 1-4*
850mm x 530mm (framed)
Fabriano and Drafting film
2010

Detail of *Perforated Identity 1-4*
850mm x 530mm (framed)
Fabriano and Drafting film
2010