

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Leeson, L.H. (1974-1978). *Roberta Breitmore*. [Performance art].

My inquiry into digital identities and their impact on existence revolves around a central paradox: while digital personas are malleable and infinitely reconfigurable, they often do not reflect the true complexity of our human nature.

It left me with an understanding that the virtual identity structures existential reality, for example, Roberta Breitmore, who tells me more about the general tendency to blur the dichotomy that one is and the online part of one's self, because that line is blurring between the two subjects, and that is further emphasizing the surreality of existing inside the digital realm and its effects on our self-identities and the way we relate to others. For the fictitious character Roberta, it is through real-world experiences and interactions that are demarcated between the fictive and the real. Roberta is more than just a character that Lynn has created, her identity is formed and validated through social interactions, documentation, and even her own mental assessments. This interplay of identity construction in both the physical and digital realms highlights my quest: how does our digital self, like Roberta, exist in and affect our tangible world and, conversely, in the digital world?

My reflection on Roberta Breitmore's existence challenges conventional understandings of identity as fixed and singular. Instead, it proposes a view of identity as a fluid and negotiable construct, much like the digital identities we curate across a variety of platforms and online interactions. In the realm of digital interaction, where anonymity and pseudonymity allow for multiple identities to coexist, Roberta's presence raises some key questions: if online identities can also affect and interact with the world, are our online identities as real as our physical ones?

In creating digital representations that interact with physical space, I hope to reflect the existential dilemma that Roberta embodies: the struggle for authenticity in a world that values elaborate personas. My translations echo the internal conflict and disorientation caused by managing multiple identities in a reflective junction, abstract, and sometimes confusing media hybrid. I investigate the construction of virtual identity through digital media. Her existence as both a separate entity and an extension of Lynn herself. This duality is particularly acute in the digital environment, where creators can hide their true selves behind their work, just as online personas can be manipulated and curated to present a specific identity.

Furthermore, through translation I began to think about the fate of our digital characters: can they be easily dissolved, or will they always exist in a digital world beyond our control? In a world where online behaviours can have

long-term effects, this question is more and more important as we wade through the after-effects of our digital footprints.

Roberta Breitmore is an exercise that transcends being a historical footnote to the realm of performance art, something without which I cannot view authenticity, impermanence, and transformation of identity in the digital world. Her life and dissolution, both, prompt me to consider the existential importance of our selves in the virtual world: are they an extension, a substitution, or just an imitation of our 'real' selves? Through the critical lens of Roberta Breitmore, I enter into a bigger conversation about the self in a technologically mediated world.

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books.

Through my iterative practice, I have noticed how the digital realm allows individuals to project curated versions of themselves, which has influenced my understanding of the fragmentation of online and offline roles, a site where identities are both constructed and deconstructed. Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together* has influenced my recognition and critique of this duality. Turkle's view of our online identities as "masks" has given me the opportunity to take my observations in the direction of a larger context, where these virtual selves are often constructed to fulfil social expectations or to explore aspects of our personalities that we may have suppressed in real life.

In my observations, I am witnessing the manifestation of these virtual masks daily. Each social media platform becomes a stage for listing frames where different versions of the self are performed; Instagram showcases my aesthetics and life, Twitter amplifies my socio-political voice, Facebook echoes family and social connections... However, while these fragmented selves may seem to expand the boundaries of expression, they also lead to internal dissonance. Turkle's discussions of online connectivity and the illusion of intimacy challenged my initial acceptance of these platforms. Whereas I once saw it as a rich platform for self-expression, I now also see it as isolating and superficial. Virtual interactions lack the physical dimension and spontaneity of real life, demonstrating raw dissonance between the emotions put forth on display and the emotions felt. Navigating these multiple digital identities is both freeing and disorienting. Turkle's work brings me to a critical evaluation of how such matters may lead to a fragmenting self. At first, it would sound like such division would heighten self-expression, but instead, it becomes a cause of turmoil as I navigate my sliced-off identities with my core self.

Fluffy ideas about 'masks' inspired further investigation into the limits of our digital identities and the psychological consequences of this construction. In the translation, I compared how this came to be on a screen—reflective environments—against how they actually present themselves in such stilted, empty physical spaces. This dullness mirrors the emotional vacuity that comes

with digital forms of communication. Turkle's exploration of the psychological destructiveness of keeping up a digital identity brings me to even more jarring yet illustrative places. For the translation, subjects are provided with a mirror that reflects their cultivated digital images, as contrasted with real-time footage of their raw reaction. This experience is supposed to be jarring, reflecting angst and disorientation over sustained self-editing and performance online.

In critically viewing Turkle's work, I also reflect on the heightened reality of virtual space, magnification of our existential crisis. Not only the very value of our interaction in digital space but, more so, of the very fabric of reality in our technology-addled lives.

In short, Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together* not only inspired my understanding of digital identity, but also made me question the nature of our interactions and identities in the digital age. Through my translation, I hope to provoke the audience to reflect on their own digital personas and the impact these have on their real lives. The 'masks' we wear are not just digital constructs, but are intertwined with our lives, influencing how we see ourselves and others in a world where the line between the real and the virtual is forever blurred.

Steyerl, H. (2012). 'In Defense of the Poor Image'. In *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 31-45.

Hito Steyerl inspired me to embrace and incorporate the imperfections and transience of digital identities, highlighting their powerful role in personal expression and social engagement in the digital world. 'Poor Image' illustrates how digital images prioritise accessibility over quality. This concept challenges traditional notions of authenticity and authority in visual culture, in the same way that digital personas subvert traditional understandings of identity. In digital space, low-resolution headshots or hastily produced personal photographs can become vehicles for rich and complex expressions of identity, carrying meanings beyond their visual fidelity. These digital representations, while often considered less legitimate or 'real' than their high-resolution counterparts, become important markers of identity, embodying the ambivalence and complexity of the self in the virtual realm. Is it possible that capturing the ephemeral and fluid forms of our virtual selves could provide an observational lens on the ways in which we exist and interact in digital environments?

Benzon, P. (2016). 'On Publishing: Fugitive Materiality and the Future of the Anthropocene Book'. In *Publishing as Artistic Practice*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 282-294.

Paul emphasises the persistence of the analogue format, and as I think about the 'longevity and depth of books' and the 'radical elongation of paper', I am drawn to think about digital identities, which are similarly elongated and

expansive, compared to the tangibility of our physical selves of our physical selves, yet ephemeral. The fact that analogue identities persist 'long after any single digital format has become obsolete' reflects my own existential wrestling with the ephemeral nature of the digital self. The book also discusses the duality of the textual object in information culture, the radicalisation of presence and absence. In the digital realm, identities can be masked or completely fabricated, leading to a sense of inaccessibility and disconnection from others. The confusion and contradiction of self-perception triggers an existential crisis - how real am I in the digital space? How do these fluid and multiple virtual identities affect my concrete self in the physical world? Furthermore, the text's exploration of the co-existence of technological reproducibility and singularity challenges and expands my view of digital identity. In a world where digital identities are easily replicated and disseminated, the singularity of the physical self becomes a stark, almost radical antithesis. This dissonance between replicability and uniqueness led me to think about the authenticity of our avatars and their impact on our understanding of self. I am driven to think about how these identities are made, perceived, and decayed.

Baudrillard, J. (1981). *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. St. Louis, Mo: Telos Press Ltd.

Jean Baudrillard discusses how symbols do not just represent reality but replace or simulate it. In virtual space, our identity becomes a collection of symbols - texts, images, and interactions - that are often disconnected from our physical reality. These symbols not only represent us but become us in the eyes of others in the digital realm. The blurring of the line between symbol and reality echoes the existential crisis I am exploring: if our digital self is just a symbol, where is the 'real' self?

My encounter with Jean Baudrillard prompted me to start thinking about the commodification of digital identity. Online, our identities are not only symbols but also commodities that can be shaped, traded, and manipulated for social capital or monetary gain. This commodification raises critical questions about authenticity and alienation in digital space. As we curate our online selves to gain likes, attention, and shares, are we losing the essence of our authentic identities, or are we simply adapting to a new symbolic cultural economy? This prompts me to incorporate elements reflecting the commodification and alienating effects of digital identities into the translation-discussing the potential loss of self in screen-filled avatars.

Kosuth, J. (1965). *One and Three Chairs*. [Installation art]. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Joseph Kosuth offers a critical perspective on the interplay between reality,

representation, and understanding in the digital age, challenging the viewer to consider what constitutes a 'real' chair, or indeed what makes a chair a chair. In the context of digital identity, Joseph's questioning of representation and reality helps to illuminate the complexity of our virtual selves, which, like the triple representation in 'one and three chairs,' consists of a real person (the physical chair), an online profile (photo), and shared personal data or descriptions (textual definitions). Components. Each of these components offers a different perspective, but none of them fully encapsulates the complete nature of the individual. The fragmentation and multiplicity of selves in the digital realm leads us to question which manifestation, if any, is the most authentic. Furthermore, Joseph raises pertinent questions about the translation and transformation of objects or concepts across different mediums. This reminds me of its connection to the online transformation of identities, in which digital media impose their own distortions, enhancements or reductions. The act of presenting complex, multifaceted human beings as digital data and archives can be seen as a form of translation that is inherently reductive and shaped by the parameters and biases of digital platforms.