The Lack of Collectıve Memory and Identity Constructıon in Cyberspace

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Abstract

According to Maurice Halbswachs memory depend upons social conditions. Social framework is the sine qua non of the existence of memory. A lonely person can neither has an individual nor a social memory. However social amnesia and forgetting is a problem in contemporary world wherein social life and the society is fragmented; in addition, the identity is the result of this fragmented world. The frantically identity-seeking is a side effect of the repression and tension rooted in globalization and individualization. Identity in today's world is unstable, multible, fluctuating and fragmentary. If the identity is a seeking of escaping from uncertainity, one of the reasons of this uncertainity is the lack of collective memory. The problem in producing and transfering the common past in today's world, in other words the loss of collective memory is lead to the individualization of the society; identity means for a man -who is imprisoned in a permanent "now"- a kind of a safety home in an unsafe world. As Barbara A. Mitsztal asserts "memory and identity depend upon each other since not only is identity rooted in memory but also what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity." John Locke sees memory as the criterion of personal identity and equates it with a collection of experiences. He says that "I am what I remember."

The essence strategy of postmodern life is not the construction of identity, avoiding to make it immobilized. Digital world and cyberspace fulfil this need through the cheapest and easiest way. Digital world offers us a lot of opportunities in having different identities. On the internet an individual identity becomes so fluid. Cyberspace allows people to construct their self-presentation and to play with online identity. The user become the author of their life.
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Keywords: Identity, collective memory, individualization, cyberspace, second life.

Just as community collapses, identity is invented.

Jock Young

I am what I remember.

John Locke

Introduction

Modern industrialized society characterized with mobility which begins with the arrival of villagers to the cities in order to work in factories. Afterwards, their journey continues this time to the cross-continental countries and the cities. In consequence of this imposed mobility, people cannot inevitably endure the previous links and eventually break off them. Random relations are mentioned instead of traditional relations (Taylor, 1995, p. 53). From now on everyone is a stranger because they are displaced and lost their roots. Unlike in traditional life, people in modern life feel not only like a stranger but also at the same time insecure because they lack of "natural" identities that they have inherently or given to them by their communities and make them feel comfortable and peaceful. Even they have identities in modern life, they still feel uncomfortable, because the identities they have are always under a constant threat (Bauman, 2003, pp. 257-258). The collapse of memory, which is one of the most important tool in providing the unity of community and afterwards society, occurs at the same time after industrialization. Even though the act of remembering is individual, it is in fact a social activity. Because individual memory and its construction can only be actualize through the relations with others. During this process "language, symbols, events and social and cultural contexts" are used as tools. As B. Mitsztal (2003) remarks that "much research illustrated that memory is intersubjectively constituted because it is based on language and on an external or an internal linguistic communication with significant others." Furthermore, man can remember merely in being a member of a community and whenever he/she remembers something, he/she thinks it in its social context (pp. 11-12).

In today's world, reproduction process of collective memory cannot continue and a person, who was formerly a part of a collective identity, should build his/her identity by himself/herself. Consumer capitalism helps individuals by either offering prepared identities or providing fragments which are necessary in building identities. However the problem is not

only the process of having an identity, but also the confirmation of identity by the society. The market which can distinguish such a gap, offers building materials through advertisements, displays and digital world that are necessary in building an identity.

These goods are exhibited by placing them into in a specific context and in the context of specific life style because the customers can consider these symbols in this context. Through the private identity construction tools which was prepared by keeping the individuals needs at the forefront, man can construct an identity by combining the fragments (Bauman, 2003, pp. 263). At the end of this process which reminiscent the building process of a building, "parchment" identites arises which is proper to the rationality of the world: Rapidly consumed, forgotten and disposable. In an era where the reality, meaning, history, revolution and social and communal break up (Kellner, 2000, pp. 371), on behalf of making space to the new, getting rid of the past becomes a necessity. For the reason that, forgetting rendered valuable in this era (Bauman, 2000, p. 39). Collapsing of community, society and the subject, subject is no longer a cement of whole (Lefebvre, 1998, p. 75).

This article claims that memory, which played a decisive role in the continuation and construction of identity, has lost its function in today's world. It also claims that forgetting leads to the lack of collective identity. Since if the identity is a seeking escaping from uncertainity, one of the reasons of this uncertainity is the lack of collective memory. In this study, it is also asserted that ICTs and cyberspace enabled people another dimension or environment to build new, different and various identities which is proper to the logic of late modern life. In the last chapter it will be argued that cyberspace has become an area to find new solutions in identity crisis in the case of MUDs and SL.

Memory and Its Loss: The Link Between Memory and Identity

Memory being a characteristic of societies in which custom or tradition plays a decisive role was not the subject and a major topic of debates of sociology since Durkheim. Since sociology has been from its beginning interested mainly in societies that place greater value upon change. Durkheimian perspective "has expanded the understanding of the role of commemorative symbols and rituals in crystallizing the past and preserving order and solidarity." Memory which is described as a process, an activity, a construct by Barbara Mitsztal (2003), is social and cultural as well as personal and resonance. In other words,

"while it is the individual who remembers, remembering is more than just a personal act." (p. 4, 6).

History of memory is divided by Pierre Nora into three periods. In premodern times the relations between people and their past was natural. The fall of "memory" occured in nineteenth century through industrial and social modernization. The relation between people and their past was reconstructed as the tradition lost its meaning. Elites produced sites of memory in language, monuments and archives which had one common referent which is the nation state. However, in the twentieth century, ideology and the reality of nation state collapsed:

> These first-order simulations have been replaced by second-order simulations of natural memory. The media culture of the twentieth century spews out identities and representations of the past which have little relations to any shared traditions, life worlds or political institutions (as cited in Kansteiner, 2002, p. 183).

Belonging to a group or a community is a primitive emotion which comes from the tribal societies as we mentioned before. Belonging to a nation is the weakened forms of these emotions (Tomlison, 1999, pp. 130-131). Nation states undertake the reconstruction of collective identity. They answered the question where we are coming from, and the state where we belong to. However it is claimed that the age of nation state is closed as a result of globalization. Class as the main determinant of our social position get the people together in an economic way and there had been a link between people because of the codes that class produced. Class maintained the construction of collective social identity. However, Stuart Hall (1998) remarks that these kinds of collective identities doesn't respond who we are anymore and he believes that they do not have a unifying power and they are inadequate in giving back the identity codes as they do in the past. Nation state is weakened because the economy of nations were incapable of being thrown upon themselves (p. 89, 47, 67-69).

The notion of collective memory refers to the past which is commonly shared and commemorate. The word c*ommemorate* comes from the Latin words of *com* (together) and *memorate* (to remember). Commonly shared past is the most important factor of collective memory. Collective memory also shapes the reality by providing people with understanding the symbolic frameworks that enables them to make sense of the world. "Because the past is

frequently used as the mirror in which we search for an explanation and remedy to our present life." (Mitsztal, 2003, p. 13). Our present experiences based on the knowledge about past and images about the past serves to legitimate the present system in the society (Connerton, 1999, p. 11).

The distinction between collective memory and cultural memory is that collective memory is not necessarily constructed by being the member of traditional societies. It is also existed on the level of families, professions, political generations, ethnic and regional groups, social classes and notions. All these examples indicate that human being is always the part of several mnemonic communities (Kansteiner, 2002, p. 189). Cultural memory refers to people's memory that is constructed from the social institutions, films, monuments, statues and souvenirs, etc. Cultural memory also embodies in regularly repeated practices of commemoration, cerenomies, festivals and rites (Mitsztal, 2003, p. 12). The reason why we used the notion of collective memory in this article is that it refers to a variety of groups and all these groups play a part in the construction of collective identity.

Animals also have memory but considering the connection between memory and identity is that the memory has a function in unifing the people and the communties, it is the characteristic of human based on the human ability. It is a great discovery that Halbwachs mentioned that since human memory depends on socialization and communication, it can only be described as a function of social life. Memory enables people to live in groups and communities and living in groups and communities enable people to construct memory (Assmann, 2011, pp. 15-16).

Although the objects do not have a mind to remember, their function cannot be underestimated in remembering. Things like madeleine by Marcel Proust, monuments, archieves, libraries, anniversaries, feasts, icons, symbols, images cannot have a memory of their own but they all can remind the past and their beholder. Groups also do not have memory in the way individual does, but they can make themselves a memory by erecting monuments and by developing a variety of cultural techniques that support memory. "Memory is not a metaphor for embedment but rather a metonym for physical contact between a remembering mind and a reminding object." (Assmann, 2011, pp. 17-18).

In accordance with the rationality of today's world, since everything is produced by the logic of extinction whether spritual or material, not only individual memory but also material culture which is a tool in continuation of social memory is vanishing (Mitsztal, 2010, p. 26). Today's man is getting and should get rid of not only the sculptures, monuments, books and etc. but also the objects protected in attic which are the guardians of individual memories. E. Rochberg-Halton in 1977 determined in his research about the people living in the North part of Chicago that the objects which are accumulated by them are not about the monetary ties but about the relative ties. These are the objects that embodies the experiences and activities. Home becomes just as a museum wherein man can protect him/herself from the devastation which is associated with the space-time compression. Home becomes the base of our nostalgic memories which is associated with a place such as country, city, region, district, etc. (as cited in Harvey, 1999, pp. 245-46). However the power of capitalist culture that feed itself with the slogans of "disposable", "don't save", "buy a new one" rendered memory unnecessary and it confirmed forgetting in accordance with its own rationality.

Since forgetting automaticly saves man from the collective dependences, enables individuals in having new identities. Forgetting is an active process both in creating individual and new and shared identites in a new setting (Janet, 1996, pp. 317-35, as cited in Connerton, 2008, p. 63). In addition, forgetting or memory loss is the trigger of an person with multi identity and one dimensional. For instance, if one forgets, he cannot realize the difference between the original and artificial meaning of an object. Herbert Marcuse gives an example of Bach played in supermarket. It means for Marcuse to empty all the original meaning of Bach. Man who got stuck in "the reality of everyday life", can only get away from the reality by remembering, in other words by collective memory. (as cited in Assmann, 2001, pp. 87-88)

In fact, getting away from past matchs up with to the logic of modernity and to be modern in radical manner means to break off all ties with the past (Huyssen, 1999, p. 179). Memory is not a form of a globalized, mobile and rootless world, but it is about a traditional, non-industrialized societies as we mentioned above (Measburger, Heffernan, 2011, p. 3).

While the continuation of collective memory in nonliterary societies was provided by rituals, in literacy societies the continuation of memory was provided by writing. However writing can no longer be the vehicle of memory because of the digitalization of books with the

developments of ICTs. (Koçak and Koçak, 2012) The shift from oral culture to written and print and then electronic culture caused some changes in experiencing time. The perception of past is changed and the opportunities for the abstract thought is developed. Thus, it can be said that the evolution in the form and the role of collective memory has been shaped by the technological changes in the means of communication and this is the most important factor in structuring the status of memory in modern society (Mitsztal, 2003, p. 22). Along with the developments in ICTs, memory is transfered to the world of chips and computers and as Andreas Huysses (1999) mentioned the more the memory is recorded to the data banks and image bands, the more the memory loss will increase. Furthermore, the cultures' desire and the ability in remembering is decreasing day after day.

Remembering, however identifies us in the present. However, although such tools as museums, monuments and memorial are the places in reshaping the modern people's memory, it is clear that they are the carriers of periodic which means that some monuments are protected as the "myths and stereotypes" of memory, some are brought down in the period of social collapses (Huyssen, 1999, p. 178). According to Georg Simmel, ruins are the places to find the roots of our identities in a rapidly changing world. The identification of a group depends on the places, demolitions, landscapes, monuments and urban architecture and they all help to protect the memory of a group (as cited in Mitsztal, 2003, p. 16).

Memory helps in constructing the national, cultural, ethnic, religious and collective identities; it is seen as the guardian of difference since it helps us in remembering and in protecting our different selves which we had through our unique life. Memory is a central medium through which identities are constituted. The dissociation of the self from memory means the total loss of self and all the activities to which a sense of one's identity is important (Wolin, 1989, p. 40, as cited in Mitsztal, 2003, p. 2). Moreover, memory and identity depend upon each other since not only is identity rooted in memory but also what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity. (Mitsztal, 2003, p. 133). Identity in contemporary world is a keyword because:

> (…) people use identity to make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with others and how they differ from them. Today memory is widely called upon to legitimate identity because the core meaning of any individual or group identity is seen as sustained by remembering (Mitsztal, 2003, pp. 132-133)

John Locke sees memory as the criterion of personal identity and he equates it a collection of experiences which are laid away for later retrieval in their original form. He believes that we are what we remember. In the previous times when the societies were more stable, identity was not so much an issue. However today, the "nature" links between identity and memory is problematized because of declining the theoretical and practical importance of theological and religious assumptions (Mitsztal, 2003, pp. 132-134). Today identity is seen as the product of the multiple discourses and for this reason it is not stable, rather multiple, fluctuating and fragmentary:

> The postmodern conception of identities as fluid, multidimensional and personalized constructions, together with the politics of identity, seen as a central aspect of postmodern politics and communities in which the legitimization of a unitary identity or an overarching sense of self has diminished, has highlighted the links between memory and identity." (Mitsztal, 2003, p. 134).

However, collective identity allows people to be identified in a social level. On the other hand, present influences the past, the reconstruction of past depends on today's identities and contexts. Memory has an important role as the source of reality. However collective memory is increasingly shaped in today's society by institutions such as schools, courts, museums and mass media. The rapid technological developments in the field of communication in the late nineteenth century and the creation of mass audience have ensured the power of media in ordering the knowledge about past (Mitsztal, 2003, p. 14, 20, 22). This means that since dominant ideology or the power has got an authority to have a control on such institutions, it also has a control on shaping collective memory. Collective memory is fragmented where state control media and education system. It becomed a "black hole" dominated by ideological values and is used to produce legitimacy for the ruling class.

Individuation and Identity Seekings*

David Riesman remarks that young people lost the social "spirit". In this age, living the moment and living just for yourself by ignoring the previous generations and links is already an indispensable passion. As Riesman mentioned, losing the social spirit arises from losing the sense of belonging to a generation and historical continuity. The only thing that has a

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* The concept of identity became widespread and popular after 1950s and 1960s with Erikson's (1968) notion "identity crisis" and Goffman's concept "spoiled identity" (Bendle, 2002, p. 2).

meaning is a person himself and his acts (as cited in Lasch, 2006, p. 24-25, 115). However, the human life which was a part of a community or a society up till now, was not a privilege of himself. Human life so far is lived "as if the lives of their ancestors and their children", not selfish and not only for him/herself (Wolfe, 1976: 40, as cited in in Lasch, 2006, p. 27). Today life only belongs to the one who lives the life for only him/herself and since the life is lived only once, it must be filled with pleasure as much as possible. To be able to make this pleasure greater is merely possible to keep the body young as long as possible. As Jock Young also mentioned when the community collapses identity is invented. The more the man loses the feeling of being part of a community, the more he tend to identity seeking.

People experience a narcissistic individualism in the present. Mass culture strengthen the social pressure of individualism and the person is deprived of the possibility of the self protection of an individual (Horkheimer, 1998, p. 166). Living more than one life at the same time which doesn't have a link in between leads to a feeling that self is contradict with its own identity and this feeling leads us to escape from our own identity (Tourine, 2002, p. 234).

Unlike modern and late modern times, identity in traditional societies was fixed, solid and stable. Identity was a function of social roles and traditional system of myths which is remarked before. Man borns as a member of one's clan and a member of fixed kinship system and dies as a member of these groups. According to this point of view, identity was not a problem in premodern societies; it was neither a subject of a discussion nor a thought. It was not possible for an individual to undergo identity crisis. One was a hunter or a member of a tribe, that's it. However, modernity's logic is based on mobility. Nothing can be stable in modern world. In this context, identity in modernity is more mobile, multiple, personal and depends on alteration and innovations. Furthermore, identity is social in modernity and is about the others and it is an individual as well as a theorical problem[*]. Therefore the process of identity in present makes people more anxious:

> Anxiety also becomes a constituent experience for the modern self. For one is never
> certain that one has made the right choice, that one has chosen one's 'true' identity, or

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[*] The reason why identity in the theoretical perspective is a problem is that there is a contradiction between the theorists of identity. They have different perspectives about the issue of identity. Some theorists see identity as a self which forms a personal identity and an innate self. From Descarde's *cogito* to Kant's and Husserl's *transcendental ego,* identity is conceived as something essential, substantial, unitary, fixed, and fundamentally unchanging (Kellner, 1992, pp. 141-142).

even constituted an identity at all. The modern self is aware of the constructed nature of identity and that one can always change and modify one identity at will. One is also anxious concerning recognition and validation of one's identity by others. Further, modernity also involves a process of innovation, of constant turnover and novelty. Modernity signifies the destruction of past forms of life, values and identities, combined with the production of ever new ones. The experience of modernity is one of novelty, of the ever-changing new, of innovation and transitoriness. One's identity may become out of date, or superfluous, or no longer socially validated. One may thus experience anomie, a condition of extreme alienation in which one is no longer at home in the world (Kellner, 1992, p. 142).

Alvin Toffler remarks that some structural changes occur both in individual and group identities in paralel of social changes (as cited in Akça, 2005, p. 9). According to this, in agricultural, in other words in traditional societies and in medieval Europe identities were unchanging and evident and there was neither an individual nor an individuality. However after the industrial revolution and emerge of modern societies, individual become the center of interest (Giddens, 2010, p. 51, 103).

K. Gergen in his study[*] remarks E. Erikson's interpretation: "In the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without sense of identity" (as cited in Bendle, 2002, p. 2). It is because that the identity is an alternative of community. Identity was born where the community is died. So it can easily be understood why it so attractive and interesting and causes passion. Identity is a kind of "haven" and "natural land" which gives back the sense of confidence which is lost in a globalized and individualized world (Bauman, 2001, pp. 187-188). In a society where the sense of time and place lost and where everything raised on the slippery and ever-changing society, man either won't fit in all these changes and get away or being able to participate life will be possible only if with identity (Giddens, 2010, p. 232).

In his article John Rutherford (1998) warmly confess that he identifies himself with "left" and this sense is originated from the feeling that human being needs a field to represent the self

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[*] K. Gergen, The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life, New York: Basic Books, 1991: 38

and get the self accepted (pp. 26-27). In this respect to become a member of a group or to define one self with a group or in other perspective identity seeking whether individual or collective is about to find a safe haven in a mobile world (Harvey, 1999, p. 337).

However today the problem is not only having an identity but also it is about how a person will have an identity. In a world wherein a lot of options are in circulation, it can be understood if a person cannot find the right identity. However this instability is not only about the abundance of choices but also it is about the contadictory mood. Since telling about who you are means telling about what you are where you belong to, what you believe and what you want at the same time, it is not possible for a person to answer all these questions undoubtedly (Weeks, 1998, p. 86).

Identity is also about removing the uncertainity which is said to be a modern practice (Bauman, 2003, p. 18). Having an identity on behalf of escaping from uncertainty is and has become a duty for a modern person. However, since it is a heavy burden for a person to undertake and carry out such a duty, mass culture and media offer the ready identities or the fragments and elements which is required in creating an identity on behalf of promising that they will help and support in the process of having an identity. Thus the problem in having an identity since modern times has transformed its form and content. Now the problem is not the formula of the process of having an identity, rather the suspicion about the acceptance of identity by the society. Because today it is easier to change the identities as a "costume" (Bauman, 2001, pp. 182-184).

Furthermore, individual responsibility is required for a person to construct the self. In this process a lot of instructors, trainers, coaches, counselors and guides emerges with the promise that they all will help the individual. All these mediators claim that they have the best solution in identity construction and protection. All these are proper to the logic of capitalist market that it initially bring a need into being and it claims that if this need is not satisfied, there will be a gap. In this time the market convinces indivuals that this gap can only be filled with the solutions of market. Thus, identity doesn't differ from the other products in the market. Firstly, market either offers a prepared identity to an individual or lead the way in constructing an identity. If this identity is consumed or causes a boredom, market has an

infinite number of choices. At this stage the problem is not having an identity but fixing it (Bauman, 2001a, p. 120).

The problem of belonging in today's world is the result of "lack of coordinate" of people who has lost the sense of historicity (Rutherford, 1998, pp. 25-26). Living in today's world hosts dilemmas inside. First of all is the merger / framentation dilemma. On one hand modernity parts and on the other hand combines. Considering the individual point of view, the problem of merger is about the protection and construction of identity (Giddens, 2010, pp. 237-238). The other is the dilemma of weakness / acquisition. Unlike in traditional societies, an individual's life in modern life is shaped by the external factors. After the market began to lose control, individuals, who were firstly under the pressure of machine, experienced an alienation. The theory of mass society refers that the more the coverage of the social systems expands, the more the autonomy of the individual decreases. Each individual is merely an atom in a large sum of individuals (Giddens, 2010, p. 241). Horkheimer (1998) remarks that when he talks about an individual, he meant a conscious individual who is aware of his/her own individuality (p. 145). However it is impossible for an individual who is a part of a mass to identify himself/herself in natural way. Beyond that the development of an identity is only possible through the dialogue with others. In fact this is the nature of identity. However the difference in modern times is the need for recognation (Taylor, 1995, pp. 44-46). Individualism and fragmentation in modern times don't let people to be in dialogue comparing with previous times.

As a result of this section, it can be said that from the sociological perpective as M. Castell claimed, all the identities are constructed. The issue is how, from what and by whom and for what. Materials from history, geography, biology, collective memory and individual fantasies is used in the construction process. But the individuals, social groups and societies process all these materials and they rearrange their meanings (Castells, 2004, p. 7).

Identity From Modern to Late Modern

Wishes and the needs are all about the logic of modernity. Each invention is used as a material to create another need (Bauman, 2001a, p. 106). Identity must be renewed in accordance with these requirements. "Wasting" is one of the keyword that defines the present. Identities inevitably become the part of this wasting culture. Constructing a robust and reliable identities

is contrary and nostalgic to the logic of the world inwhich everything is produced to be consumed. Having only a unique identity over a lifetime is a "handicap" as Z. Bauman mentioned (Bauman, 2000, p. 41). Modern identity problem is about the construction of an identity, in other words, is about the creation, today the problem is about how to avoid to fix the identity (Bauman, 2001a). Identity has never been unified but in late modern times it is more fragmented and fractured. Identity is about the process of being rather than becoming; it is not about "who we are" or "where we came from", it is about what we are going to be and how we are going to be represented (Hall, 1996, pp. 3-4).

The modern post-industrial society transformed with all its elements that make up society. Considering from this point of view, we have to say that identity has also transformed. As Baudrillard believe in a society consisting of and fed from ruins, art, politics and of course the individuals can only bring the produced forms and to play with them (Kellner, 2000, p. 377). The best thing that individuals can only do is to play with identitites which were produced before and to combine the fragments and debris instead of inventing new identites. The person of this era continues his searching but he doesn't have a concern about whether he finds the truth or not. He is interested in temporality, unplanned and unusual. He cares about instant desires. He doesn't care about the collective loyalities such as family, nation and language (Rosenau, 1998, pp. 97-98, as cited in Akça, 2005, p. 11). It is claimed that self is disintegrated, fragmented and disconnected and this uncentered individual does not have anxiety anymore. Unlike modern individual, postmodern individual does not have depth and coherence. Postmodern subject is the result of this culture which is fragmented, disjoined and discontinued and the subject is "imploaded into masses" as the result of this culture. (Kellner, 1991, p. 144) However it doesn't mean that collective togetherness is nonsense in a society where the individualism is dominant. The reason why postmodernity is refered by the community as wellis that this era is also characterized with the seeking of community, the hunger of community and the imagining of community. Manning Nash remarks that "the nightmare of this era is to cut off from the root and to become faceless, stateless, neutral, alienated in an organized world of others"; in other words to be seen faceless by others (as cited in Bauman, 2003, pp. 315-316).

The postmodern discussions problematized identity more than before. It is said that it is a kind of myth, a kind of illusion. As Frankfurt School, Baudrillard and the other postmodern theorists mentioned that:

> (…) the autonomous, self-constituting subject that was the achievement of modern individuals, of a culture of individualism, is fragmenting and disappearing, owing to the social processes and the levelling of individuality in a rationalized, bureaucratized, mediatized, and consumerized mass society (Kellner, 1992, p. 143).

We mentioned that having multiple and contradictory identities is the characteristic of late modern societies rather than traditional societies. It is offered to a individual a "bewildering range of choices over social and cultural identities, including based on gender identity, nationality, religion, family, relationship, sexuality, occupation, leisure interests, political concerns and more". Since the identities are built and rise on a slippery ground, there is always a possibility to lose the existing identities. For instance if the middle class elite CEO loses his job and cannot find another similar job, he will have serious doubts about his identity (Cheung, 2007, p. 277).

ICTs and Identities in Cyberspace

It is required to approach identity discussions in another dimension after the developments of ICTs. In the embodiment of classical sense of space and time and the occurance of the sensation that time and space is limited, the maps that was brought from Alexandria to Florance in 1400s have got a crucial role. Because the maps made world shrink enough to fit on a single sheet of paper. The concept of space in Renaissance formed the conceptual foundation of the Enlightment project. The conquerable feature of space and arrangement of space in a rational way is the part of modernization project. Space is arrenged as the indicator of man's domination (Harvey, 1999, p. 277, 279). This sense of this classical space understanding is collapsed in modern era as Henri Lefebvre mentioned. (1997)

At the beginning of new millennium, ICTs are reconfiguring the relation between time and space; it is restructuring the spatiality and materiality of space and the relationship between people and space. The unifing power of the developments in information and communication technologies and cyberspace are changing our life and the way we live our lives in the same way telephone, automobile and television did in twentieth century. Today the combination of

information and communication technologies and cyberspace are said to be one of the leading revolutionary developments in twenty-first century (Kitchin & Dodge, 2001, p. ix).

The transformation of spaces become possible in 1990s with the help of developments in computer technologies. Cyberspace which exists parallel to our world made the physical space useless in many ways. WWW made the cyberspace a reality for its users. The computerization of contemporary world is impacting the culture of societies wherein we live and from now on "computerized" society is noticed (Castells, 2000). According to Lev Manovich we are in the middle of new media revolution today, "the shift of all culture to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution and communication." Comparing with printing press and photography "computer media revolution affects all the stages of communication including acquisition, manipulating, storage and distribution; it also affects all types of media -text, still images, moving images, sound, and spatial constructions." (Manovich, 2012, http://andreknoerig.de/portfolio/03/bin/resources/manovich-langofnewmedia.pdf).

Cyberspace is defined as a new and a parallel universe that is created and sustained by the world's computers and communication lines; a place that can be accessed through any computer linked into system; everywhere and nowhere wherein nothing is forgotten and everything is changed; a common mental geography built by consensus and revolution; a place wherein the depth increases with each image, word or number, it is a wavy, eye-catching, alive library of Borges; a city; very close, constant, fluid, vast; through its myriad, unbilinking video eyes, distant places and faces, real or unreal, actual or long gone, can be summuned to presence, the place wherein every document is available, every recording is playable and every picture is viewable; a laboratory for each participant; on the surface small meetings are held in rooms, larger face to electronic face (Benedikt, 2007, pp. 19-20) and it is a imaginary place wherein new worlds and new identities can be constructed. Even some thoughts claim that new media and communication technologies cut off ourselves from reality; instead they provide a virtual reality (Bell, 2001, p. 7-8, 77). Cyberspace provided us the representation of reality, a copy of original. Now, "simulacra" took the place of reality (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 11) and constructed another reality paralell to our reality. ICTs enable a placeless world and transformed the relationship between people and place (Kitchin & Dodge, 2001, pp. 15-16). "We are living our lives at the points where electronic information flows,

mobile bodies and physical places intersect in particularly useful and engaging ways." (Mitchell, 2003, pp. 3-4).

It is claimed that electronic media has totally changed mass media and other traditional media because they offered new resources and disciplines in order to construct imagined selves and worlds. Electronic media gather printed media and other verbal, audio-visual media and it made these kinds of media important. Electronic media has transformed the existing communication world (Appradurai, 2005, p. 3). Technical innovations are dominant in forming the way of thinking of the society (Morley & Robins, 1995).

As Graham and Marvin (1996) specify in advance that cyberspace has caused linear and simple changes in our everyday life; affected our relationships; formed new communities; caused changes in business practice; changed the way we live (as cited in Kitchin & Dodge, 2001, p. 25). Although cyberspace did not take the reality's place, it opened up a new dimension in our everday life and it also has been a place that respond our identity expectations. It is also said that computers that is characterized as the test objects for postmodernism and cyberspace that has been possible by computers lead to a confusion between real and artificial. Because so many things possible in real life are no longer possible in cyberspace. We can talk in cyberspace, we can share our thoughts and we can recreate ourselves. We can come together with people from all over the world which is impossible in real life; we can build new kinds of communities, virtual communities (Turkle, 1995, pp. 9-10, 22-23). We talk in real life, discuss, fall in love, play games, have friends, spend time with friends. In cyberspace all of these are possible (Kitchin, 1998 & Rheingold, 2001). People can build new places, new roles and new idenities without the need of physical reality. From emails to discussion groups, cyberspace enables us to build places, identities and relationships (Maskul & Douglas, 1997, pp. 375-397).

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) enables one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many communicative practices (Jaffe & Lee, 1995, as cited in Soyseçkin, 2006, pp. 1-2). "Computers embody postmodern theory and bring it down to earth" and they also extend person's intellect and physical presence via for instance shared virtual rooms. The story of constructing identity now in the culture of simulation continues. For instance, MUDs which were the first examples in contructing identities by using computers. The participants of

MUDs are not only the authors of text but also themselves and it is a place to construct new selves through social interaction. In computer-mediated worlds, the self is multible, fluid and constituted in interaction with machine connections. Computer games in this sense enables its users to build identities. Computer games become a laboratory in constructing identities (Turkle, 1995, p. 10, 12-14, 18, 20). A player says that:

> You can whoever you want to be. You can completely redefine yourself if you want. You can be the opposite sex. You can be more talkative. You can be less talkative. Whatever. You can just be whoever you want, really, whoever you have the capacity to be. You don't have to worry about the slots other people put you in as much. It's easier to change the way people perseive you, because all they have got is what you show them. They don't look at your body and make assumptions. All they see is your words (Turkle, 1995, pp. 184-185).

An officer at the age of 26 says that he is not only one, he is so many and building characters in screen enable him to express himself. Turkle (1995) says that "When we step through the screen into virtual communities, we reconstruct our identites on the other side of the looking glass." Turkle (1995) remarks that the utopian discourse about decentralization come into vogue at the same time that society has become fragmented. The institutions that bring people together before (a main street, a hall, a town) doesn't work as before. Many of people spend their time in front of a TV or a computer screen. Meanwhile, as social beings we are trying to retribalize. In this sense computer has a central role. We are responding each other through electronic emails. We are joining some internet groups whose members are from all over the world (p. 185, 177-178).

From the perspective of postmodern theorist the identity-seeking in digital world march up with postmodern culture. Having more than one identity doesn't cause a concern for a person who doesn't have any concern or anxiety about himself. Whether in real world or in cyberspace having multiple identities is a game for today's individual. Futhermore, cyberspace enables us to get rid of our stigmatized identities (Cheung, 2007, p. 278). Today, in constucting an identity, text based games as MUDs is not as popular as before. Unlike traditional computer games, in Second Life (SL), which is launched in 2003, users interact with each other through avatars. The avatar is the locus of identity in SL. When signing up for an account in SL, one must choose first and last name and the apperance includes clothing,

skin, hair, eyes colour. Futhermore, they can also choose accessories such as tattoos, jewelleries. An avatar doesn't have to be a human. You can be a flamingo, devil, animal and giant robots in SL (McKeon & Wyche, pp. 3-4). When the avatar is chosed by the player, he/she can participate SL world. She/he can do whatever she/he wants to do just like in real life. SL can be visited as a real place and the "residents" can "meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities and buy items." All the things that exist in SL is shaped by the collective efforts of individuals and independent constributers (Erdoğmuş, 2009, pp. 36, 40).

The most important feature of SL which is very relevant to our argument that everyone in SL represent him/herself with bodies that are created for themselves. Therefore SL is an ideal place to build identities that is imposible to have in real lives. When it is asked participants about their avatars, how similar or different their avatar are from their real life appearance, it is found that most of them made themselves more attractive than real life. For females this meant being skinnier while for men it meant being more muscular. Most of the guys wear jeans and t-shirts to show their muscle bodies, because they don't have them in their real life. Women look like in their twenties in SL but 90% of the women are in their 40s (McKeon & Wyche, pp. 22-23). In this case, people can be whatever they want to be and look like in SL through their avatars.

The question why people participate and represent themselves in SL is not easy to be responded. Fırat Erdoğmuş (2009) in his study asks that why people have sex with others by using their avatar. It is absolutely not about the needs of avatars. It is about the needs of body of the real person. Thus, it can be claimed that the need of sex in cyberspace originated from the actual need of actual body (p. 42). In this point of view we can argue that the need of virtual identities in cyberspace, especially in SL originated from the need of real life. You can be whatever you want to be; you can look like anyone; you can use variety of elements to be seen attractive by other avatars.

Some believe that SL is better than actual world (Erdoğmuş, 2009, p. 46). Because it is like the actual world, but not the actual world itself. It is very interesting to recognize how different the actual and the avatar's look can be. Erdoğmuş gives an example in his thesis that an overweight couple choose slim and good looking avatars in SL. He interpret this sample as

the "opportunity to play with actuality" (pp. 47-48). For this sample we can say that some people become a part of SL because they open up a parallel world, another dimension to be the one they always want to be and imposible to be in their actual life. However we cannot generalize this interpretation for all its users.

Pratically the reason why people change or play with the self in actual life does not differentiate from the reasons why people choose to be another one in SL or in cyberspace. The reason of the process of having or constructing different identities is not very much different from the actual life. Furthermore, cyberspace enabled another dimension, more variety for this need. Besides no one cares about your actual look in SL. Through SL people can easily satisfy themselves with another look. Erdoğmuş (2009) argues in the conclusion of his thesis that there is a big resemblance between the Second Life world and the actual world because 90% of this world is created by the participants (p. 130). Thus, it can be claimed that the reasons why people experience the process of identity construction are similar both in actual world and in cyberspace. Because SL is the production of same people in actual world.

SL is the reflection of postmodern life. In postmodern times "multiple identities are no longer at the margin of things". As Turkle (1995) remarks:

> The internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life. In this virtual reality, we self-fashion and self-create. What kinds of personae do we make? What relation do these have to what we have traditionally thought of as the whole person? Are they experienced as an expanded self or as separate from the self? Do our real-life selves learn lessons from our virtual personae? Are these virtual personae fragments of a coherent real-life personality? How do they communicate with one another? Why we doing this? Is this a shallow game, a giant waste of time? Is it an expression of an identity crisis of the sort we traditionally associate with adolescence? Or are we watching the slow emergence of a new, more multiple style of thinking about the mind? These questions can be adressed by looking at many different locations on the internet (p. 180).

When we think about these questions in the context of our research, we can argue that identity seeking and identity construction in digital places such as SL is about an expression of

identity crisis but not only for the youth but also for people of all ages (Erdoğmuş). For some critics, cyberspace enables to abolish the hierarcy, makes the difference invisible (Bell, 2001, p. 117).

Conclusion

Memory depends on social conditions and can be constructed through communication with others. Today the function of memory is weakened which was to keep community together and to be the guardian of collective identity. Identity emerges where the community collapses and the nation lose its significance and finally it becomes the duty of a modern person. Identity emerges in modern times as a side-effect and pressure of globalization and individualization. If the identity is a seeking of escaping from uncertainity, the reason of this uncertainity is the lack of collective memory. As Assmann remarked that memory enables people to live in groups and communities and living in groups and communities enables people to construct memory. Memory helps people to construct national, cultural, ethnic, religious and collective identities; it is seen the guardian of difference since it helps us in remembering and in protecting our different selves. Collective identity allows people to be identified in a social level. However today, memory loss or in other words forgetting is an active process both in creating individual, new and shared identities in new settings. The more the man lose the feeling of being part of a community, the more he tends to seek identity.

Today, developments in ICTs enabled cyberspace which can be described as a paralel universe created by the world of computers. Computers as the test objects open up new places for identiy constructing and having different identities. SL which is one of the samples of these places enabled people to have multiple identities. The act of having identities become a game in actual life as well as in cyberspace which matchs up with the logic of postmodern world.

As this paper tried to discuss in detail that while identity seeking is a duty for a modern person, it seems to be as a game for postmodern person. The process of identity seeking is experienced in different other dimensions as the result of the need of having multiple identities which is as a consequence of outmoded identities. Cyberspace is prefered by people of all ages as it provides new facilities in identity seeking and construction. In that case it can argued that cyberspace and its different spaces is the reflection of actual world. Consequently,

identity seekings and constructions in SL can be considered as the expression of identity crisis in actual world.

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