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Unique Identity

Preface

I was given the opportunity to examine four great theorists, William E. Connolly, Emmanuel Levinas, Martin Heidegger and , Friedrich Nietzsche, in an attempt to shed some light on the idea of identity. Arguments concerning personal identity vary and there is an illusory aspect concerning the identity that theorist seem to often miss in their explanations. I have tried taking into account the various arguments concerning personal identity and have included ideas that encompass the part of ourselves that is beyond explanation. In the age of internet, with mass media becoming more and more interactive and each person becoming an interchangeable persona amongst friends and strangers, the idea concerning who we are becomes more of a looming question. The awareness that we are more than our persona and that we wear different hats from place to place, internet site to internet chat room, makes who we are apparently more malleable. We have become more aware to what affects us and to how it affects us, who we are, who we can become and not, who we are not and who we are aspiring or pretending to be. What is to us our persona and who we are, as a constant or variable, becomes a prevalent subject of our being. To be able to understand what personal identity is, is needed more today than ever. Thus this examination is pertinent in our contemporary world of multiple personas and the stable self that remains in each personality we portray.

Unique Identity

It is said that everyone is unique yet does this phrase not imply that everyone shares the common trait of uniqueness? Does such language make uniqueness common? No matter what one's answer might be, this quandary illuminates how language reduces otherness and difference into the ideas of the same. In this paper, I will examine the idea that what makes anyone particular and unique is based on an otherness that defies signification. This otherness is the unsayable part of identity. I will show that Connolly, Levinas, Heidegger and Nietzsche share the concept that identity has an unswayable and ungraspable component, a component that determines the ground of one's uniqueness and being. This uniqueness is lost in any attempt to signify it. I will show that the other's presence can only be experienced as a performance of the other that only hints to the hidden alterity of that other: An alterity

that lies beyond the face or physical presence of that other. This alterity overflows the bounds of the relationship of self and other and can neither be grasped or known in its totality. I will posit that this alterity is the difference that makes all description of identity insufficient to totally encompass anyone's identity accurately. Finally I will examine the political ramifications of the unsayable. Difference everyone possesses and the necessity of a politics of difference that promotes tolerance based on the idea that no doctrine of Identity can sufficiently describe identity and Being. I will show how politics itself may not be sufficient to change social behaviour and that a socialization of the idea of the tolerance of difference based on the ungraspable quality of identity and Being would be necessary to change social behaviour in general. Only when the common person approves of tolerance as the appropriate behaviour of a good human being does the tolerance of difference become a social norm the many will obey. Thus, I will show how one would use Nietzsche's ideas of the herd mentality to instil the Tolerance of difference as a guideline for herd behaviour. This guideline would offer members of the herd the opportunity to transcend to the realisation of the unsayable other, though such an event would not be necessary for the health of society.

In *Identity/Difference*¹, Connolly claims identity is an illusion and overflows the bounds of any schematic attempt to determine its parameters. No objective treatise can ever contain the ever-changing contingent nature of personal identity. (Identity/Difference pp118-121, 180) It cannot be captured in words and defies all models of understanding. Identity's potential is endless. No cultural or social definition has ever perfectly encapsulated any individual's being (Identity/Difference 163). No idea of identity is perfect and complete. Personal identity is always in constant flux (Identity/Difference 45-47, 63-65). It is fluid and ever- changing as it is renegotiated moment from moment in every relationship it presents itself in (Identity/Difference 46-48, 96-97). For Connolly, identity never solidifies. It is organic and defies temporal determination. Since the self eludes definition, cannot be grasped by doctrine, and goes beyond any sort of definition, it is also other to the self. When the individual attempts to define the self, they discover a part of identity that seems other, or alien, to the self (Identity/Difference pp.173-174). One discovers that one does not know oneself and thus should not even expect to know others. For Connolly, the unsayable part of identity accounts for the irreconcilable difference that makes everyone unique and does not allow identity to be translated into any model of understanding (Identity/Difference pp. 162-164).

I will now examine Emmanuel Levinas' theories concerning the absolute alterity of the self and other and the transcendent realisation of the unsayable unsignifiable absolute other that is realised when one encounters the otherness of the other. According to Levinas, in the "The Trace of the Face"², the "I" of identity possesses an otherness which is absolutely other to anything it can experience, know or signify. Identity is not a fixed, unflinching and unchanging characteristic that can be easily described. The description of identity is not an adequation of the "I". Nothing said could ever encompass the otherness of the "I" that shines through any description as alien to any signification. Words return the self and identity to the world of sameness sacrificing difference to the generalizations of language (The Trace of the Face p.345)

¹Connolly, William E. *Identity/Difference*. University Of Minnesota Press Minneapolis, U.S.A .1991.

² Levinas, Emmanuel. "Trace of the Face", Translated By A Linglis, *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie*. Sept 1963 pp.605-623.

.In *Infinity and Totality*³, Levinas claims the self absorbs everything it encounters into the self according to the ideas of the same. In “Meaning and Sense”⁴ Levinas states that the self has a horizon that demarcates the limits of its understanding. One’s horizon represents the bounds of what the self has absorbed into itself as the same (“Meaning and Sense“ pp. 36, 60. *Totality and Infinity* p. 33). In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas claims the absorption into the self is an ontological process based on what one perceives to be the common traits that make objects similar or the same. Objects do not have a will of their own and are easily absorbed into the self. However when one encounters another person one realises that the other has a will like the self and resists being absorbed into the same (*Totality and Infinity* p. 43). The alien otherness of the self acts like an other that resists being subsumed into the same (*Trace of the Face*. 345). The other challenges one’s power to freely absorb otherness into the same (*Totality and Infinity* 85-87). In the face of the other the self experiences a unsayable presence of the other (*Trace of the Face* pp. 352-353). A presence that overflows the face and hints at a hidden alterity of the other as a self like oneself.

According to Levinas, the” I” of identity resists the same. It cannot be absorbed into a single ‘we’ representing many selves equally (*Totality and Infinity* pp.35-36). It cannot be experienced and remains outside the presence of the face to face. The face’s expressions are a trace that point to the other’s alterity as a self. (*Trace of the Face*, pp.355-356). One realises that the other, like the self, must have also been absorbing what it encountered into its own horizon of the same (*Totality and Infinity* pp. 39-40, 48-52). The face is a trace or evidence of another that is absolutely absent in the relationship of the face to face. This absence is the absolute alterity of the other that remains hidden behind the face and beyond the grasp of the self (*Trace of the Face* pp.354-356). Levinas posits that the self can only illuminate the others alterity juxtaposing it against the totality of the same (*Trace of the Face*, p. 357). When one attempts to signify the other’s alterity, one is forced back into the world of sameness. In this return the other’s otherness remains like a trace to an alterity whose presence eludes words. This trace leads to the idea that human perception is limited and that there are things that will always lie beyond humanity’s ability to experience and grasp. Levinas calls this movement a departure without return, a transcendent experience of the other that is left unsatisfied (*Trace of the Face*, pp. 348-350). Realising that there is an inexperienceable (does this word exist?) otherness to everything does not satisfy the desire to approach this other (*Trace of the Face*, p.55) *Totality and Infinity* pp. 33-35). Levinas claims that this departure is caused by a desire that is caused by "no lacking" (*Trace of the Face* ,p.350). This desire causes one to trace the traces of otherness to an absolutely other that never left a trace to begin with: An other that is absolutely other to anything humans can experience or conceive (*Trace of the Face*pp. 355-357).

In *Infinity and Totality*, Levinas clarifies the transcendental movement from the face to face to the absolute other. In Section I of *Infinity and Totality*, Levinas examines the effect of dialogue concerning various theories of totality of the other. When self and other engage in a face to face conversation about totality, they realise that their theories are not the same (T p.35- 40). The other’s perspective is different from one’s own and points to an alterity to the other that the self cannot know. This difference of perspective causes the self and the other to question their theories and the

³ Levinas, Emmanuel *Totality and Infinity*. Duquesne University Press, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. 2001.

⁴ Levinas, Emmanuel *Basic Philosophical Writings* “Meaning and Sense,” Indiana University Press, Indiana, U.S.A. 1996.

totality they both derived them from. How could two ideas of the same totality be different? This disrupts the coherency of one's idea of totality and causes one to transcend to a face to face with the absolute other. Since neither theory could encompass the other, one realises that there is something about totality that no theory could ever encompass. This something is absolutely other to anything anyone can grasp (Totality and Infinity pp35-40). Since what one thought totality was becomes shattered by the idea that one cannot ever know that Other entirely. One also begins to question whether one can ever grasp the other's otherness or for that matter one's own otherness. The otherness of both self and other are realised as alien to adaption. The alien other that the self could not adequately describe in language is realised as an absolute other to everything the self could ever know (Totality and Infinity p. 37-38). What is said cannot encompass the difference of what it signifies. The uniqueness of anything is lost in the generalizations, themes and categorizations one needs to make to allow language to function (Totality and Infinity pp. 70-71). The uniqueness of a green apple cannot be put into words as there can be many green apples signified as identical. Levinas claims language is based on ontology. It signifies otherness based on the ideas of the same. When one attempts to signify the others difference in language, that difference is subsumed into the same (Totality and Infinity pp.39-40, 42-43). The unique presence of the other cannot be translated into words. The uniqueness of identity is lost in any attempt of adaption Thus, what makes everyone particular is beyond what can be said about it and in fact what can be said has a different presence of its own. Levinas claims a face and a letter have a different presence. Each leaves a trace of the alien other of identity that cannot be put into words. Any attempt to signify the otherness of the "I" of identity reduces it to the same, concealing that difference in the new presence of the media being used. According to Levinas, a letter has a presence that is left as evidence of an author that is not present (Trace of the Face, pp. 356-358). The letter's presence and everything interpreted from it is different than a live face to face with the other.

In *Identity and Difference*⁵, Martin Heidegger makes a similar argument to that of Levinas. Heidegger believes that one begins life absorbing the otherness of the world into the same or a conceptual framework of being. This absorption is grounded in the idea of being (Identity and Difference 24, 35,58). The difference of the other is lost as the self absorbs that other within its concept of being (Identity and Difference pp. 27, 45, 62). Heidegger, like Levinas, claims that when one encounters an other, one discovers that the other's and one's own concept of being do not coincide with each other. The contention between these theories causes their irreconcilable differences to become apparent (Identity and Difference p, 46). This causes both theories to shatter. One is overwhelmed by a theological transcendence of the beyond and one comes to face the Other in the realm of metaphysics (Identity and Difference pp. 54-55, 63-65). One's ideas of being becomes scattered into what seems an abyss (Identity and Difference pp.32-33, 38-39). Upon closer scrutiny many ideas reveal themselves while others conceal themselves (Identity and Difference p. 37, 65). One has a phenomenological experience of the Other. One realises that no one idea is the ground of Being, but one has to assume Being is the unsayable ground that allows thinking to take place (Identity and difference pp. 58-60). One realises the Difference of the Other cannot be put into the words of the same. Within this abyss one reforms the scattered ideas about Being into a new coherency that is appropriated into a different theory of the Same Difference. Being is realised as the limits of knowledge and is accepted as the unsayable ground of metaphysics that allows thought about anything to

⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *Identity and Difference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago U.S.A. 2002.

occur. (Identity and Difference, pp. 37-39, 58). One also realises a silence that exists beyond being, a not yet thought, an unthinkable that can never be thought (Identity and Difference pp55). When one articulates a different theory of the Same Other, the theological quality of the Difference is lost (Identity and Difference pp. 65-68). However, One can present a new theory of the Difference of the Other based on the ideas one appropriated during the event of theological transcendence. A new theory of Difference that is different to any other theory on that subject. A new theory does not represent the Difference of the Other; rather it represents the ideas of the abyss as they form a new theory of Being in the flux of Difference (Identity and Difference pp. 39-41,46-47). One can write about such an event of appropriation, or the theory appropriated during that event, offering a different opportunity for others to transcend to an experience of the Other. (Identity and Difference pp. 39-41) One might say that Heidegger's book *Identity and Difference* is a different discourse concerning difference meant to enlighten people. In fact, Heidegger illustrates the difference of his interpretation of the Same by comparing his ideas to Hegel's (Identity and Difference pp. 42-47). Thus Heidegger admits that Hegel's and his theories are different though comparable explanations of the Same phenomena of Being.

For Heidegger, Transcendence leads to theological ideas that signify greater unsayable experiences of Being. The combination of ontology and theology or the onto-theological always remains unsayable as its all-encompassing nature is always beyond signification (Identity and Difference pp. 70-71). Language is limited to the knowable and can only refer to the unknowable as an abstract reference to that which is beyond knowledge (Identity and Difference p.73). There is something to everything that is beyond mere words including the experience of other people and identity in general (Identity and Difference p.50). No adaquation of identity is possible; the description of the other is not the identity of that other (Identity and Difference pp. 28-29) The other contains an alterity that is Different to any difference that can ever be said about it. This Difference of the other, like the Other's Difference, is always beyond signification. The totality of the other cannot be encompassed. People are more than physical and metaphysical explanations (Identity and Difference 40-41). Personal identity is unsayable and thus onto-theological. However, one can experience the other in a theological transcendence and realise the Difference of that other so as to be able to articulate a different idea of the other's identity using language and ideas of the same. Thus, one can describe someone differently based on the ideas grasped about them at the event of appropriation, while realising that the other's entirety is beyond words (Identity and Difference pp. 37-38). The unsayable totality one faces when one realises the other theologically is the presence that is experience- as the ground of that person's being. Each person has an unsayable presence that must be experienced first hand (Identity and Difference p. 67). This is a presence that does not translate into words, though it can be described in a manner that signifies it differently than others. One can argue that in the same manner as the event of appropriation allows one to grasp a different way to describe the Other, one can also form a different description of the other knowing that what makes anyone Different cannot be signified and loses its theological uniqueness when put into the language of the same. Like the ideas of Being, the ideas of the other's identity become shattered during transcendence and scattered within the abyss. Upon closer scrutiny, one has an event of appropriation in which one grasps a new description of the Difference of the other. One appropriates the newly formed picture of the other as a Difference that cannot wholly be put into words. This difference description of the other represents the unsayable difference of the other without encompassing that Difference. In other words, it is possible to describe the

difference of another as a unique amalgamation of words and ideas that will delineate a uniqueness based on the Uniqueness of the person being described. However, the phenomenological Difference appropriated at the moment of transcendence is lost in the generalities of Language. One's presence is always unique to one's person, while all descriptions, no matter how different, are not. The uniqueness of any description is not an adaption of the Uniqueness it is drawn from. One can experience the unsayable Difference of the other, realise the phenomenological experience of the other's transcendental identity, while being unable to put the particularity of that Difference into words that would describe the other as wholly unique. Since the Difference of the other is completely particular to the individual and cannot be contained in the words of the same, one's unique presence and being cannot be described in a way that would contain the complete particularity of the other. Thus, what makes anyone ultimately unique is ungraspable.

Nietzsche, in his work "Beyond good and evil" found in *The Genealogy of Morals*⁶ and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, can be interpreted as espousing a similar theory of identity as the above-mentioned theorists. The unsayable quality of identity is realised in a transcendence of height that speaks to nobody yet presents itself in volume (Zarathustra 154). One might interpret Nietzsche as suggesting that the silent unsayable other can only be experienced phenomenologically as a presence that cannot be put into words. Nietzsche's idea of the height of transcendence necessary to experience the ungraspable can be said to be similar to that posited by Levinas and Heidegger. In the first section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche can be interpreted as presenting a poetic narrative of the understanding of transcendence. Zarathustra is found on top of a mountain. He has been there for ten years enjoying his spirit and self. Traditionally mountains and trees have been used as symbols for the height of transcendence. They are places where humans come to commune with the divine. In fact, Nietzsche makes multiple references to both mountains and trees throughout *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and includes these images in the titles of both part one section 8 'The Tree and the Mountain' and part three sec 6 'The Mount of Olives'. In 'The Tree and the mountains', Zarathustra explains the idea of height and transcendence to a boy sitting under a tree surrounded by mountains. The boy seems symbolic of the biblical Adam or serpent in the Garden of Eden. Zarathustra teaches him the lesson of the silent height of the unsayable, an unsayable that according to the bible was heard speaking as the voice of God. However, the boy, unlike those in Eden, does not hear the voice of the unknown and is easily swayed by Zarathustra into accepting the silence of that which is beyond all human experience. This suggests that for Nietzsche, the enlightenment of the garden of Eden was of a lower height than that reached by Zarathustra. In 'The mount of olives', Zarathustra seems to make a comment concerning the transcendent height reached by New Testament thinkers and ancient Greek philosophers. Nietzsche seems to correlate Greek philosophy and New Testament thinking. Furthermore, in Old Testament rhetoric, olive trees are considered symbols of the Greeks. Thus one could interpret the height of the mount and olive trees as representing the height of both Greek and biblical enlightenment. Zarathustra seems to refer to the mount as being smaller than his usual dwelling. The lower height of the mount and the olive trees as compared to the top of Zarathustra's mountain suggests that Nietzsche believes that the Greeks and New Testament thinkers had not achieved the height of Zarathustra's transcendence. Furthermore, in this section Zarathustra claims the snow of loneliness

⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich *On the Genealogy of Morals*, "'Good and evil' 'Good and Bad'", Translated Walter Hoffman and R.J. Hollingdale. Vintage House, New York, U.S.A. 1967.

and silence, which seems a reference to the state he is found in at the beginning of the book, must melt before the understanding of the olives allows him to mock pity in the warm sun of enlightenment, a sun realised outside the cave he dwelt in. One could interpret Zarathustra's unwanted guest in this section as Christianity or Christ himself. Christ had on many occasions visited his own mount of olives. Zarathustra ridicules his guest in a Socratic fashion on top of the Mount of Olives. This image of Socratic method is reinforced by the idea of the flies that are attracted to the conversation to help bother the guests like mosquitoes and gadflies do. Furthermore, Zarathustra pays no special homage to his guest who is used to being worshipped. Rather, Zarathustra acts like a Socratic gadfly undermining the idolatry associated with the guests' suffering. Thusly, Zarathustra claims to choose nature over the divinity of this guest.

In Part 1 section 1 Nietzsche claims Zarathustra has gone through a change. On the morning of that change he rose and greeted the rising sun from his mountain top cave. The cave seems to represent the gloom and seclusion many who have transcended height and have gone over and beyond feel when they realise the uncommon or noble traits of their personal achievement. As is entailed in the etymology of the word *episteme*, one stands apart from others, one stands alone. The change Zarathustra greets the sun with is like a Socratic enlightenment from within the shelter of the cave of transcendent ignorance. This ignorance is the refuge of enlightenment people. Even the old prophet of part one section 2 has chosen to seclude himself from the vulgar mentality of the many because he realised they do not understand as much as he does. However, this prophet is bitter in his seclusion while Zarathustra enjoyed his. Thus, the mountain cave represents the seclusion of self awe many people who have experienced the height of transcendence choose to live with. Being inside a mountain or a forest of trees can be said to represent an earthly shelter. Zarathustra hid from mankind within the seclusion of a cave at great height, which was still in the earth. The old prophet, like the boy in part three sec 6, took shelter under trees. A tree does not possess the height of a mountain; it represents a lower level of transcendence. The serpent of the Garden of Eden was placed in a tree and was the most cunning animal created. Thus, the height of trees can be seen as being akin to the cunningness of the serpent. In "Good and Evil" Nietzsche calls this kind of cunningness a trait of the resentment mentality of religiosity (Good and Evil pp 44-45) The height of the flying eagle or the mountain top, which can be interpreted to represent transcendence, was not realised by the old prophet. However, the boy in part three, section 6 might be seen as a younger prophet who is helped by Zarathustra to understand the height of mountains and become freed from the fate of the old prophet. Zarathustra has both an eagle and a serpent as pets representing his ability to fly past the mountain and slither down it." with courage of eagles wings and a serpents cunning"(Zarathustra p. 415)

In part one section! Zarathustra speaks to the sun of its happiness and how it relies on those it shines on for that happiness. The sun would tire of shining if it were not for people like Zarathustra. This reduces the idea of the sun's existence to egoism and what humans are capable of knowing and relating to. It pulls the phenomena of the sun down from its height, chaining it to the ideas of humanity. Nietzsche seems to imply that Zarathustra's speech reduces the sun's otherness to the realm of common humanity. From his great height, Zarathustra claims that he must go under, return from the above and beyond to the level of mankind. From this level he can preach to others concerning his transcendent realisation and help them transcend to the above and beyond. Zarathustra speaking to the sun begins his enlightened descent to common humanity. If Zarathustra had not spoken to the sun, its phenomenological presence would have remained beyond. Knowing this one could surmise Zarathustra

intentionally speaks to the sun to go under, in a way bringing that sun with him. At the end of the book Zarathustra, calls for the sun to rise to noon and claims this is how the sun comes out of the dark mountains (Zarathustra p. 439). Thus, by the end of the book Zarathustra has brought enlightenment to the midpoint of the light of day, from which its illumination is at its strongest.

According to Zarathustra all men are equal before the silent beyond (Zarathustra p.398), In part four, section 'on science', Zarathustra describes the speeches of science as the old fears that reduce the world and everything in it, like the animals, into the spiritual theism of the day. Science is as religious as Zarathustra's spiritual encounter with the sun. Since Zarathustra claims to choose natural dictums over divine ones, anything described as theism would be shunned if not ridiculed by him. Zarathustra would have no faith in religion or science and would not believe that either could accurately describe Being. For Zarathustra "God is dead"(Zarathustra p.124) and if science is a faith then science is also dead. That is the idea that any idea is divine and infallible is dead. No idea should be considered the true explanation of phenomena and no idea should be given hegemony over the idea of Being. Zarathustra claims that all humans are equal before God or the beyond and since God is dead there is nothing higher than the equality of humans equally impotent before the unsayable otherness of the silent beyond (Zarathustra p. 398), In "Good and Evil", Nietzsche suggests that scientifically explained phenomena, such as the idea of cause and effect, are not fixed. The limits of perception and language mislead humans. People are misled into believing what can be said or codified in language to accurately represent the phenomena it signifies (Good and Evil p.45). Thus, Nietzsche also believes that there is an unsayable element to Being that eludes all signification and human knowledge. By speaking to the sun, Zarathustra achieves the same type of reduction of phenomena to the down under as scientific explanations do. Hence when one speaks of transcendence the realisation of the height of going over and beyond becomes reduced to the words of the underworld. Levinas also uses the term underworld to refer to the reduction of otherness to the same (Trace of the Facep.357). In this way, when one attempts to describe identity one has to go under and reduce the unsayable beyondness of identity to the sayable. The sayable is of the world and not the beyond It is the codifying of unfixed identity into the misleading ideas of language (Good and Evil pp. 45- 46).

In "Good and Evil", Nietzsche explains how ideas become ingrained as the guidelines for appropriate social behaviour. These guidelines are the dictums of morality. Nietzsche claims the idea of the propriety of behaviour can be traced through a genealogy of morals to humanity's desire to be more human (Good and Evil pp. 35-36 42-43). This desire leads to the blind obedience of these ideas of propriety as if they were norms of behaviour. These norms are used to judge and identify people based in their obedience to them (Good and Evil pp. 27-28). It is noble or good to obey these norms and vulgar or evil not to (Good and Evil pp. 31-33). Nietzsche calls this blind obedience to these norms the herd mentality (Good and Evil pp. 45-47, Zarathustra pp. 438-439) The herd is misled into believing that what can be said and codified as models of behaviour reflect the true nature of humanity. The ideas of the good are exalted as the ones that truly represent propriety in society. The ideas of proper conduct become the guidelines for judging people's actions in the same way that the laws of physics are considered the indelible guidelines for interpreting natural phenomena (Good and Evil pp. 45-47). When one transcends the notion that language and knowledge reflect reality then one breaks away from the herd mentality. One is freed from believing that any idea can reflect a truth of being, and emancipated from blind obedience to such ideas. One realises that every idea is a down and under or worldly concept. These ideas are

not the transcended beyond that cannot be put into words or forms into knowledge (Good and Evil pp. 46-48).

According to Nietzsche the phenomena of the "I" of identity cannot be said. Zarathustra claims "your body and its great reason: that does not say 'I' but does 'I' (Zarathustra p.146). The physical presence of another's performance before the spectator is beyond words. For Nietzsche, identity is thought in action (Zarathustra pp.146-147). Identity can be experienced like the rising sun above. Anything said about identity reduces it to the down under. The down under is the common and any reduction to it can be interpreted as an attempt to reduce the alterity of the other to sameness. Like Heidegger, Nietzsche believes that one can experience the unsayable phenomenological as a physical performance of otherness of the other before the self without being able to put it into words. As well, Nietzsche also believes that there is a something beyond the perception of man that is ungraspable and unsayable. The "I" that is present in the physical actions of the other has both a physical unsayable phenomenological component and an ungraspable unsayable component. A person who has reached transcendence, or what Nietzsche calls the overman or one that goes over the down under, can interpret the physical presence of an other without forcing it into the pre-established paradigms of the herd mentality (Zarathustra pp. 398-399). The distinctness of the physical performance is lost to the herd as it only sees the appropriateness of the "I"'s behaviour in the context of the established ideas of behaviour. Identity for the herd is not based on the uniqueness of the performance. It is more like the textbook analysis many psychologists often give their patients. Such psychologists never look at the particularity of the content of their patient's distress, as much as how it can be categorized. For instance, one might be told "If you're hearing things you must be delusional".. To the herd, identifying the other is purely a categorization according to the established ideas of identity that have hegemony in their society (Good and Evil pp.44-46). Often subsequent action taken by someone will be judged according to the labels they were given previously. According to Nietzsche, each performance of identity should be seen as a particular event of thought in action (Zarathustra pp.146-147). If each performance of the other is used to paint its own idea of the other, one will realise the uniqueness of the other is beyond the herd's ideas of identification. The overman realises the uniqueness of the other cannot be said or interpreted according to the ideas held by the herd. The overman judges the other based on the other's particular performance at any one time. The overman is also conscious that this picture of the other does not actually fix the identity of the other and remains particular from one performance to the next performance. For Nietzsche one can experience the unique presence of an "I" doing but never describe that uniqueness in words. Thus, what makes one different and unique is beyond the significations and codified paradigms of identity held by the herd. The uniqueness of identity is beyond knowledge in general. What is said down under can never encompass the beyond of identity.

The idea of the performative aspect of the "I" of identity is also present in the works of Connolly, Levinas, and Heidegger. Connolly claims identity is not fixed. It changes moment from moment, constantly being renegotiated as a interactive performance before the other. Since there is no fixed definition of identity and no doctrine describing the truth of identity, the unsayable component of identity can only be experienced as a presence before an other (Identity and Dfference46-48, 96-97).. Each performance before the other is always different and cannot be captured in language or models of understanding.

Furthermore, the way one acts before any other depends on how one reacts to any identification that other may give the self. The self performs positively or negatively according to how one accepts such labelling. If one positively identifies with a given label one will try acting in accordance with the ideas associated with that label. If one negatively identifies with the labelling, one will act according to what one thinks is the appropriate behaviour for not accepting such labels. Often one acts against labels one disagrees with in an attempt to change the way others identify the self. One performs in light of a given identity based on the ideas that one considers appropriate for one's choice made about that identity. One labelled a rebel may begin acting like a rebel, or if one disagrees with that labelling one might start acting in a non-rebellious manner. Thus, one performs the ideas of identity that one accepts. This performance is interactive and is constantly changing and renegotiated based on the other's reaction to the self and the self's reaction to the other's own performance of identity (Identity/Difference pp. xiv-xvii). Thus, identity is a role one performs.

According to Levinas the face to face is the closest the self and other can ever come to the alterity of the self each possesses (Totality and Infinity p.39). The face is the trace of the unsayable alterity of the other (Trace of the Face p.354-355). The face performs before the other. Levinas claims that he agrees with the idea that one has a phenomenological experience of the presence of the face, an experience that at the same time also interrupts phenomenology (Trace. p.356 Infinity and Totality p.37). The performance of the face before the self is realised in the context of the same as the trace of a self that is other and beyond the face to face (Trace of the Face, pp. 354-355). The face expresses hidden needs and desires. Its expressions are the physical performance of the hidden other's self, which hint but never betray that secret other behind the face. One can never know the hidden intentions of the other or whether the other is being sincere or acting out of character. The face is the edge of another self, the most one can expect of a physical manifestation of the other's alterity. The face is also the physical body; it is the vehicle of an alternate self-performing before the self (Infinity and Totality pp. 50-52, 67). Its presence is unique to the particular performance of the face and each face has its own presence (Trace 187-193). No one forgets a face and even in its absence the memory of that face remains as a trace of a self not here. The presence of the face cannot be put into words. The physical face is part of the uniqueness of identity and is a trace of the unique other that hides behind it (Trace 354-356). Thus, the "I" does with the face and body what one can only experience as a first hand performance in a face to face with an other

. In Heidegger's work the performative nature of identity becomes evident in the phenomenological presence of the face of theological transcendence. At the moment of transcendence the ideas of totality become shattered and scatter throughout the abyss. These ideas become both revealed and hidden at the same time forming a phenomenological experience of the face of the Other. One experiences the abyss as an event of appropriation in which Difference is experienced as a direct performance of the Other or as Levinas would say, a face to face with the absolute other. One experiences a theological transcendence of this Other realising it can only be grasped at the surface as the phenomena one faces. One also realises, that like the Other, the other's Otherness is beyond the performance of the other the self faces.

The alterity of the other is beyond its performance before the self. Moreover, the phenomenological performance of the other remains wholly Other to anything that can be codified. No description can capture that something that is present in a live witness experience of an other. For that matter, different media and technologies have a different phenomenological presence that is not translatable from one media to another.

Different communications using different mediums, or even the same medium, are always experienced differently (Identity and Difference 38-41). A photograph or video shot of a horse running is not the same as seeing that horse in the flesh. A movie seen in a theatre seems different when seen on TV or on the computer. The same picture seems different when seen on TV as compared to on the computer. Thus, the way one experiences the other and the difference one draws from that other depends on the medium by which one experiences that other. In theory, according to Heidegger, one could have more than one event of appropriation and establish more than one different description of identity and Being. This is exasperating if one experiences the other through more than one medium. Each performance has a unique presence and is a different experience of that other. Thus, one could have as many different ideas about something as the number of times one has encountered that other.

At this point, I would like to examine what can be said politically about identity in light of the above-mentioned unsayable quality of the uniqueness of identity. According to Connolly, political discourse is an intricate part of the maintenance of the health of a liberal democratic state (Identity/Difference p.94). Political discourse is necessary to the undermining of entrenched ideas of identity that lead to violence against difference (Identity/Difference pp. 187-190). Violence against identity occurs when the other does not conform to the self's ideas of Being and the self tries to force the other to conform to the self's idea of Being. If somebody believes that their ideas of identity are the truth of Being, then one will perceive different competitive ideas of identity as deviations from the norm. This becomes especially problematic when a theory of identity is entrenched and holds hegemony in a society. These ideas are the norm of behaviour that Nietzsche calls the guidelines for the herd mentality. These norms are the bases of the judgement of appropriate behaviour and belief. They are valued as the natural characteristics of civilized humanity. Behaviour outside these parameters devalues the actor's humanity. One is evil, sick or less human when one acts outside the accepted norms of society (Good and Evil, 27-28,35-36,42-43 45-47). For instance, homosexuality has often been labelled as abnormal deviant behaviour. Up to the 1980's homosexuality was referred to as a mental disorder in many psychology textbooks. Many homosexuals were treated as having an illness. In some cases, as in Nazi Germany, homosexuals were persecuted and killed as a way to stem the spread of their "disease".

Connolly claims a liberal society should not hold any doctrine as the true explanation of being (Identity and Difference pp.199--120-187-190). Since no doctrine can encompass the truth of identity and identity remains ungraspable, all such doctrines should be considered as equally competitive ideas concerning the same uncodifiable thing. Connolly believes people should engage others in courteous political discourse concerning this unsayable nature of identity and undermine all doctrines and ideas of hegemony over the explanations of Being. One should try to problematise the idea of identity within any doctrine by presenting alternatives, which include the idea of an ungraspable identity that no doctrine can fully grasp. This will help followers of any doctrine accept other doctrines as equal competitors to their own (Identity/Difference pp.116-121). As Heidegger would say, the competing doctrine would be considered a different explanation of the same unsayable Difference of identity. This different explanation problematises the coherency of the entrenched doctrine and may cause people to transcend to a personal experience of the Other. For Connolly, political discourse is sufficient to foster the ethical equality needed for a politics of difference (Identity and Difference pp. xiv-xv, 86-88, 161). This ethical equality fosters the tolerance of difference. Connolly seems to suggest that it is possible to have an entire

society transcend to a realisation of the unsayable Difference of the Other and accept that all humans equally are incapable of grasping identity. Connolly seems to believe that his project will enlighten everyone in a society and make them into overmen. However no matter how optimistic Connolly is that problematising identity can lead to the peaceful co-existence of competitive doctrines of identity, it can also lead to animosity towards those threatening the entrenched values of such doctrines.

Levinas suggests that the transcendent realisation of the Other that cannot be truly named leads to either Ethical or Tyrannical behaviour (Totality and Infinity pp, 42-48). The ethical relationship arises when the self and other equally realise their powerlessness to encompass totality with their own theories and accept that no theory can have hegemony over the description of totality (Totality and Infinity p.39). They approach each other for solace to their inadequacies and together make concrete the unsayable by agreeing to its existence. The acceptance of the other as equally powerless before the Other allows one to accept the loss of power one experiences face to face with the other, who is secretly a self like the self, and the absolute other that is absolutely other to anything humanity could ever experience and know. The acceptance of the other allows one to quell one's anxiety concerning the unsayable and accept difference as an inevitable and necessary part of everyone's uniqueness (Totality and Infinity pp. 84-90). When one does not accept the inevitability of difference and perceives the other as a threat to one's ideas of totality, one resorts to ontology and attempts to force the otherness of the other into one's ideas of the same. The realisation of an unsayable Other is seen as a threat to the hegemony of the self's ideas of the same and the self seeks to erase the otherness that led to that threat. If this otherness is made to conform to the self or is physically removed, then one can return to the uncontested comfort of one's ideas of the same. Levinas posits that a return to ontology leads to tyranny as it persecutes difference and forces otherness into the same. In many cases, when the threat of the other is not quelled by the tyranny of ontology, people become violent and even try to murder the other that cannot be made into the same (Totality and Infinity 42-48). In WWII, totalitarian regimes made hegemonic claims to Being that led to tyranny and the persecution and subsequent murdering of people of different ethnicities.

It seems that ethical equality and the acceptance of differences are realized when the individual comes to grip with the unsayable difference everyone possesses. Each person's presence is a unique performance that will always resist being absorbed into any codified idea of Being. If one does not accept that everyone is an individual that is unlike anyone else and that no model of understanding will ever encompass the alterity of the individual, then one will not accept the differences of others as the inevitable norm of their personhood. Connolly seems to believe that the idea of a norm representing that which is always different is necessary for a tolerant politics of difference. Everyone is unique and this uniqueness will always cause people to have different opinions concerning the same things. This difference is the reason why one can only accept the norm that no norms can ever encompass the unsayable presence of the alterity of other people. Inasmuch as it cannot be expected that everyone in a society transcends to the realisation of the Other as a means of becoming tolerant towards difference, making a social norm out of Connolly's project to politically problematise identity would allow the cattle of the herd mentality to blindly follow this norm of behaviour in the same way the herd obeys the ideas of the good and noble. This would make the tolerance of difference a moral value and guideline for proper behaviour. To accomplish this, one would have to do more than engage people in the political arena. Even Connolly admits his project can only work if people enter the

political arena and discuss the ideas of identity (Identity and Difference 161). With the ever-growing decline in political participation nowadays the chance of having an entire society become politically active is slim. However, the idea of tolerance and the acceptance of difference as the basis of identity is a necessary idea that all people in a liberal society should practise. Since not everyone is political, one needs to convey this idea of tolerance to people outside the political arena. One could use the media and popular culture as a vehicle to accomplish this task. Society as a whole would have to be made to believe that the tolerance of difference is a norm that is noble and good. People would have to espouse tolerance of difference as the proper behaviour of all humans and consider it a part of morality. In this way, the many would act as if this tolerance is the proper and advantageous way one behaves in one's society. Inasmuch as this norm would become a guideline of behaviour and a model of morality, it would also act as a competing theory of reality that acknowledges no other theory's hegemony. If everyone practised this norm of tolerance, no theory that made claim to knowing the truth of Being would ever be considered appropriate and it would be shunned by the masses. Furthermore this norm would act like a theory of Otherness that could cause people to transcend to a realisation of the Difference of the Other and formulate a different theory concerning the Same unsayable otherness of identity and Being. These new theories would have to equally realise the unsayable Difference of the Other, since no other basis of identity and Being would be accepted as adhering to the norms of propriety. Since few transcend to experience the Other, it seems more important to socialise people to obey this norm of tolerance and allow them to realise transcendence when and if they do. In the end, it does not matter whether everyone in a society understands why this norm exists only that it must be practised. The many do not need to understand why no idea of Being or identity should have hegemony in one's society only that it is inappropriate to allow any theory to do so. Accepting difference based on the unsayable Difference everything has does not have to be understood, only followed and eventually its own obedience will lead to people transcending to a realisation of the Other. The tolerance of difference is a good thing no matter the motive for practising it and its general proliferation, as a standard of behaviour, is tantamount for the health of any liberal society. Is this not what Connolly, Levinas, Heidegger and Nietzsche are all telling us? It is good to embrace and tolerate the differences of others and undesirable not to do so. Nietzsche said the norms of society and the idea of the good stem from the guidelines for being human. Is not the practice of the tolerance of difference more human than the persecution of difference? If so then the tolerance of difference is an excellent candidate to provide a social norm of behaviour and guideline for desirable social thought and discourse.

In conclusion I have shown that what truly makes each person different is his or her unique unsayable presence that points to a hidden otherness that cannot be grasped or signified: a presence that performs before the other and renegotiates its identity moment to moment in the relationship with the other. It is a difference that makes everyone wholly other to anyone else. This otherness resists being absorbed into the same and resists being assimilated into any model of identity. The irreconcilability of each person's unique perspective of the world does not conform to any one theory of totality. This is why no theory of totality can claim hegemony over any other. Every such theory is a different theory of the Same unsayable totality, a totality no theory can ever encompass. Different theories of the same offer other's opportunities to transcend to a personal experience of the unsayable Other. Inasmuch as it might be too much to expect everyone to transcend to the realisation of the Other as a means of achieving ethical equality, it might be possible to include the idea of the tolerance of difference as

a social norm to be obeyed by the herd as that which is good and appropriate for being human. The politics of difference only enlighten people in the political arena and what is political does not always proliferate to society at large. Without a general socialization of the tolerance of the politics of difference as a norm of behaviour, the herd will continue to cling to their entrenched ideas of identity even when the laws and politics of their societies dictate differently.