WHAT DOES MIKHAIL BAKHTIN HAVE WITH
THE CYBERNETIC SUBJECT IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION?

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In the crisis and flood of all kinds of theories, when everything is possible and at the same time all this is nothing but the truth, so that at the end one knows nothing, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary for disciplining intellect. Pluralism and heteroglossia (two so typically Bakhtinian concepts) are becoming some kind of trendy ideology, accepting everything – indiscriminately, no matter whether the other's discourse is a lie or the truth. Despite that, in discourse one can sense the need to search for one's own truth, even if everything is possible.

The present-day generation, which was after the reckoning with totalitarian systems (ideological as well as technological ones) thrown into the limitless space where anything is possible, is starting to experience the fear of void after the initial c a r n i v a l e s q u e feeling of freedom; after the initial euphoria, it can only find enough strength that in its attempts of contemplation it repeats and transforms/interprets the previously existing patterns of thinking.

The present rumination ought to be understood primarily as a search for one's self (one's own Ego) among endless possibilities and repetitions. To achieve that, it is necessary to strive to be as historical (objective) as possible and to take into consideration the phases in the evolution of culture, the heir of which is also the present-day generation.

In discussing historicism the author follows the idea in which history is considered an uninterrupted stream of r e p l a c e m e n t s of (in particular eras) old – canonized forms of thought with new – uncanonized ones.[1] The repla-

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[1] The basis for the discussion of this topic is D. Chizhevsky's theory, i. e., the place where he refers to the phenomenon of the sine curve in culture: a cultural period develops in the opposition with the previous one. The aforementioned replacements, which can observed from the Renaissance to Postsymbolism, are based on the so called aesthetic identity and/or contrariness – cf. also the typology of culture developed by Y. Lotman. Hence, similarities can be found between Classicism and Realism or Romanticism an Symbolism, but there are clear contrasts between Romanticism and Realism. A certain cultural period replaces the tra-

cement is also a phenomenon noticed in various scholarly disciplines, often representing the main methodology used to explain the object of the scientific research. If this is true, a hypothesis can be made that at a certain stage of treatment one scholarly discipline is replaced by another, which means the transition to the interdisciplinary approach, leading from history to literature and culture, from logic to psychoanalysis. This interdisciplinary approach is called psycho-historical treatment of culture; the main material for understanding its rules is provided by literature or, rather, the image of man in it.[2]

In a search for one's own Ego the main point of interest is the logic of replacements in the evolution of thought, which in the present time indicates its continuity (historicalness), while the character of replacement indicates the repetitiveness of cultural psychotypes – similar images of man in various cultural-historical periods. The investigation will look at psychotypical replacements between the late phase of historic avant-garde and the emergence of Ego in computer/Internet communication, which is becoming a subject of ever more thorough psychoanalytic, sociological, and culturological studies. There is a connection between the two of them.

The study consists of two parts. In the first part only those characteristics of the culture of late avant-garde are discussed which with different value resurface in the era of computer interaction. To be understandable in the modern context, they are presented in a concise manner, considering M. Bakhtin's theory, which is a bridge to understanding of interactive forms of computer communication. The second part explains the characteristics of modern forms of communication in connection with the traditional patterns of thinking while treating them as a (new – uncanonized) phase in repetition or, rather, replacement of cultural psychotypes.

I. The discussion of the so-called late phase of avant-garde will be limited to the second half of the 1920-s in the Russian culture, marked by the literature

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dition in two ways: it is the opposition towards the previous one and the apology of the antepenultimate cultural system.

   [2] In understanding of this interdisciplinarity the author refers to Igor Smirnov's discussion of psycho-historical method in understanding culture (*Смирнов И.* Психодиахронологика, Москва 1994; if not specifically noted, all further quotes are from this work). In his book Smirnov developed a meta-language with terminological harmony between psychoanalysis, logic, and historical poetics of culture. In his treatment he finds parallels between human psychological development and cultural phenomena, i.e., he treats Romanticism in the context of castration complex, he connects Realism to Oedipus complex, he sees a manifestation of the hysterical psychotype in Symbolism, etc.

of the Oberiuites.[3] The selection of this period is not coincidental, particularly when referring to Bakhtin's understanding of culture. There are two reasons for this reference: This is the time when Bakhtin wrote his most important work (*The Problems of Dostoevsky's Creativity*); he was familiar with the Oberiuites' work, he thought highly of it, and it would be logical to conclude that their literature had an influence on Bakhtin's conception of the discourse.[4]

In his discussion of the evolution of cultural psychotypes I. Smirnov treats the Russian avant-garde in the context of sado-masochistic psychostructure, and the ideal-artistic expression of the Oberiuites as a manifestation of a so-called introverted masochism.[5] In a schematic outline of a characteristic one should try to understand how a psychotype is formed and should treat it within the relationship an individual (*Ego*) vs. the outside world (the *Other*) for this is the central relationship when investigating the image of man in the history of culture.

The basic and the most noticeable characteristic of introverted masochism is certainly the feeling that the individual (*Ego*) is unable to establish a contact with the outside world or, rather, with the *Other*. This results in a

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[3] Oberiu (Общество реального искусства) is the name for a group of artists which was formed as a new direction in the so called left revolutionary art in Leningrad. The most prominent Oberiuites include Nikolai Oleynikov, Nikolai Zabolocky, Konstantin Vaginov, Daniil Harms, Aleksandr Vvedensky. The Oberiuites defend the idea that the actual meaning of objects is created only in the actual (often coincidental) co-placement. Hence, the reality of the world surfaces by itself in pure forms which at a given moment (context) build its image. Only a concrete object, rid of all literary and every-day mundane shell, placed in the real (concrete) relationship with another object, is worthy of the meaning called art. The understanding of the concrete meaning of objects (coincidentally placed together) will bring renaissance to the world and will "clean the linguistic junk of the *fools* who went astray in the swamp of emotions and feelings from it". Objects – as viewed by Obreriuites – only seem unlogical and unreal, because we learned to accept them in a standard way, but this habit shows nothing but literary gilding, which is a camouflage for the realistic meaning of an object.

[4] In his apology of the Renaissance carnival Bakhtin clearly came close to the ideal conception of the Oberiuites by emphasizing the special importance of the fight with intellect and by considering the folk holidays, in which the central role belongs to a fool, a lunatic (as fighters against everything rational), the realization of the idea of absolute freedom. In the works by the Oberiuites, particularly in Vaginov's prose, which Bakhtin was particularly enthusiastic about, one can also notice a complete negation of rationality, and in this negation even the rationality in itself becomes foolish. In the remainder of this article other parallels will be pointed out (cf. also *Смирнов И.* Психодиахронологика. С. 302).

[5] Smirnov pays special attention to the Mayakovsky's literature, which he treats as a spiritual model to which various manifestations of the historic avant-garde are related.

feeling of suffering, manifested in two phases: (a) in a dialogue with the *Other* (the outside world) a masochist sees only himself and his desire, which he cannot socialize in any way; (b) the reoccurring feeling of inability leads the *Ego* into a gradual depersonalization or, rather, into abolishment of the self as a subject.

The typical feature of introverted masochism is therefore the reoccurring self-sufficiency in suffering, which, in fact, indicates a self-negation, irrelevance of reflection, since it is entirely formal. A similar process of auto-destruction to the one in introverted masochist can be observed in the evolution of the Russian avant-garde. Let us again draw a connection between this evolution and the relationship *Ego* (an individual) vs. the *Other* (the outside world) and take a look of how the Oberiuites reflected the programmatic principles of the Futurism.

Futurism, unlike Symbolism,[6] sets as its programmatic goal to relinquish all forms of transcendence. By declaratively requesting that each phenomenon and each word be taken as a thing in itself (слово как таковое, слово – вещь), it basically denies the existence of the *Other* (the outside world). The idea of immanence, which takes into account only the meaning of internal (inter-semiotic and textual) links, denying any kind of extra-textual relationship, results in a contradiction with the fact that even the simplest process in the creation of text requires from the author an image of something *else*. To solve the created controversy, Futurism attempts to divest everything not existing as an immanent principle of markers or a text, of any meaning (here is the origin of *zaum*!) and requires that everything extra-textual be understood as an expression of the text.

Oberiu as the late phase of avant-garde follows the programmatic principles of Futurism, internalizing its experience. In harmony with the avant-garde idea of dehierarchization of all traditional aesthetic and social values its followers reflect the futuristic idea of immanence of text, which is supposed to be without any previously determined system. Following these ideas, the Oberiuites destroy and dehierarchize the value and the meaning of futuristic *самоценного (самовитого) слова* while also relativizing the meaning or, rather, the function of the bearers of immanent information – be it literary characters (heroes) or the author himself. Significant is the Oberiuites' image of the *author as a manhunter*.[7] The author captures people from the world of reality, he fetters them in his creation until he becomes its captive as well,

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[6] The relationship Symbolism vs. Futurism confirms the idea of the aesthetics of opposites. Futurism as the central manifestation of the avant-garde replaces the previous period by negating the expression and the ideal conception of Symbolism.

[7] Cf. Труды и дни Свистоного by Konstantin Vaginov.

since for lack of any system he cannot establish any contact with it or with himself.

The negation of any stability and predictability leads to self-negation of the author as the absolute creator of the text (the author becomes its captive!), which indicates his gradual dematerialization or, rather, self-cancellation. The outside world (or the world of the *Other*) seems to be the world of endless possibilities, but no cause-effect principles apply to it.[8] These cannot even be predicted, since no system exists. This world in fact creates an illusion of absolute freedom, where the upside-down rules of the so-called real world apply, i.e., this is a kind of carnival as an anti-world, revealing the apology of the logic of absurd.

In discovering the evolution as experienced by the late avant-garde (the Oberiuites), one comes across two ideas of key importance for M. Bakhtin's theory. The first one is about the role and meaning of carnival in the folk culture of laughter or, rather, carnivalization in literature as a characteristic of the *new* and *progressive* in it, the second one is about the so-called heteroglossia, which is a sign of democratic processes in the culture and society. Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, which means taking into consideration the *Other*'s discourse, basically speaks of demolition of authoritarian and monologic word, of a word with unambiguous meaning. In this process one can see a clear reference to the Oberiuites' feeling of relativization and disappearance of author's word as such. It is becoming more and more clear that in his book *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Creativity* Bakhtin considers exactly the (introverted) masochistic psychotypical relationship *Ego* (individual) vs. the *Other* (the outside world), typical of the late phase of avant-garde, indicating the abolishment of the author as an absolute entity.[9]

Bakhtin's idea of carnivalization or, rather, his apology of the folk culture of laughter contains also the idea of negation of rationality (this is the origin of the apotheosis of a fool!), in which one can see a variant of the Oberiuites' programmatic negation of everything rational and logical. Folk holidays, which according to Bakhtin represent a discreditation of everything determinant and systematic, embody the idea of absolute freedom, which does not comply to any laws set forth in advance. A person cannot live this freedom until he accepts absurdity as something entirely possible: he accepts death as the beginning of new birth, replaces the bottom part of the body with the

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[8] Cf. for instance the text Елизавета Бам by D. Harms.

[9] Following Smirnov, it is possible to say that, according to Bakhtin, it is precisely the speaker's word that by definition contains the idea about the negation of one's own individuality. This self-denial can be seen in the fact that the author is willing to de-authorize his individuality, so that he can justify *alien discourse* (the Other one's discourse).

upper part – he complies with the rules of the anti-world or, rather, he comes to realization of its bi-worldness (двумирность).

Carnival, which is according to Bakhtin the realization of complete freedom, essentially means the apology of the absurd. It is not surprising that in the intertwining of the world and anti-world one can notice the degradation of authorship and individuality as an ultimate self-confident entity. This intertwining essentially means the defeat of the intellect and it is not surprising that in Bakhtin's understanding of the folk culture of laughter as well as in the Oberiuites' literature the image of a fool has a special value.

In the era of (self-)abolishment of avant-garde, the apotheosis of a fool should again be linked with the question about the meaning and/or value of a marker. In reviewing futuristic-avant-garde notions of a marker, in which things supposedly have a meaning on their own, the Oberiuites come to the conclusion that a marker directs us to *Nil*: the world is non-referential. In the works by Harms, Vvedensky, Oleynikov the world exists only if it is not substituted for by any marker (therefore, *nil*!).

In examining the psychotypical characteristic of the aforementioned feeling of *nil* in the Oberiuites, one can notice characteristics of introverted masochistic reflection. In spite of persistent attempts of (auto)reflection, it turns out again and again that it is pointless, since it is only an expression of its own incapability, its own void. It is understandable that in the Oberiuites' work the standard categories or, rather, expected markers shaping the world are disappearing.

The resulting process of desemantization takes place in co-positioning of opposing categories (e.g., in Harms' animate vs. inanimate).[10] Non-differentiating between the existing and the new enables the Oberiuites to assign a different/opposite value from the expected meaning to any event. The following thought of Vvedensky speaks volumes about this: For everything to be understandable, it is necessary to begin living in the o p p o s i t e manner. This brings us back to Bakhtin's theory and to the central idea about the replacement of processes in culture. In Vvedensky's thoughts one can again find similarities with Bakhtin's understanding of carnivalization. The idea of the carnival, too, is based on the idea of the opposite and unexpected, in which r e p l a c e m e n t s constantly take place. The carnival is hence demonstrated (according to Bakhtin) as constant dynamics of the unity of diametrical opposites. In this dynamics a marker never has one and only meaning or value,

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[10] The category of animacy in the Oberiuites increases in importance the lower the degree of rationality in it. The aforementioned relationship between animate/inanimate and the intellect is one of the Oberiuites' central topics, e.g., in the poetry by Oleynikov, Zabolocky, Harms, etc.

it is relative, just like markers are considered non-differentiated by the Oberiuites.

The otherwise considerable similarities between Bakhtin's conception of grotesque attitude towards the world and the Oberiuites' reflection disappear when one considers the understanding of these co-positioning and replacements on the value plane. If Bakhtin understands this bipolarity, bi-worldness as a constant dynamism in replacement of value categories with a special consideration to the social context, the Oberiuites, on the other hand, in rationalizing this process, emphasize the absurdity of any r e p l a c e m e n t . This leads the Oberiuites to the idea of incorporeity, to the idea of *void reality* and to the apotheosis of *Nil*.[11] Unlike the Oberiuites', Bakhtin accepts variability and changeability of the marker value as an organizing principle of the evolution; it is interesting that this results in apotheotic corporeity (favoring a grotesque conception of the body!).[12]

II. By extracting the main points from the above thoughts one can recognize the characteristics of the present time – the world of fogginess, elusive subject, and lost *Ego*. This is a world composed of illusions, where every image can be the truth, but at the same time every truth can be *Nil*. Who is the author, who is an individual in the time of absolute freedom, where everything is possible, and where are the recognizable characteristics of absurdity in the constant exchange of the opposing value meanings?

The ideas derived from comparing the Oberiuites' principles and Bakhtin's theory are also of fundamental importance in the era characterized by computer technology. This refers mainly to the forms of Internet interaction, in which there one can notice phenomena, which crucially marked the mentality in the late phase of avant-garde.

To make the parallels as clear as possible, it is, again, necessary to ask the question about the characteristics of the relationship *Ego* (individual) : the *Other* (the outside world). This relationship basically consists of two levels: 1. communication is with a computer; 2. communication is with some other person by means of computer.

1. At first glance the first level of communication seems less important than the second one, but modern computer interactive artistic installations speak for its growing importance. When talking about a communication with

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[11] Cf. Минин и Пожарский by Vvedensky.

[12] This refers to Bakhtin's work from the 1930's Творчество Франсуа Рабле, in which he developed the idea about carnivalization in detail and paid a special attention to Rabelais' apology of everything physiological-profane.

a computer, most often refers to various kinds of software, which represent support in using individual tools. These are the so-called support systems or connecting systems, which do not yet make real interacivity possible all by themselves. This is help offered by the supporter (wizard) in case the user is not able to carry out the expected operation. With advances in the technology the forms of this assistance are becoming more and more perfected. Presently we are talking about personalized computer characters, which remember the user's mistakes, they learn from them, and they use the experience they have received in this communication in similar interactive situations, according to their own judgment.[13] A special kind of relationship between the computer's user and the computer is created, in which the computer character is becoming a more and more independent and active supporter who is able to suggest the most efficient way for the user to reach the desired goal.[14]

2. When talking about methods of interactive communication, where the computer is the mediator between two (or more) real persons, one refers to the following three protocols: IRC (Internet Relay Chat), MUD (Multi User Domains), and the recently ever more popular VRML technology (Virtual Reality Markup Language). All these communication protocols have one thing in common: the user who wants to establish Internet communication is sitting in front of an empty screen and, by connecting to one of the aforementioned protocols, he basically knows nothing about the reality, characteristics and value system of other participants of the communication. In front of him there is *Nil*, since the markers (usually pseudonyms, displayed on the screen as the only characteristic of other participants) on their own do not tell anything about the other participant as a real being in a real time and space on the other side the Net. Only in the process of communication the user creates the image of the *Other* one.

2a. The simplest method of interaction is IRC – the so-called Internet chat. The user logs on a channel and then decides whether he will chat in the window dedicated to the communication between all the participants or he

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[13] Modern forms of computer art are based on this principle as well. Cf. an example of interactive system called Madala. This is an "interactive video system which enables the user to operate graphic and musical as well as robotic computer functions at a distance without touching the screen or any peripheral. [...] In this system, your movements are recorded by an overhead camera and reported via a computer as a digital image appearing on screen. You can turn your image into a giant cursor and discover that you have just become one big mouse able to command and control whatever happens on the screen" (*De Kerckhove*. Connected Intelligence. Toronto 1997. P. 65, 66).

[14] Models of the connecting systems mentioned above can be looked up at www.media lab.com by anybody with the access to the World Wide Web.

will rather choose individual conversation in a special window with someone from among the pseudonyms displayed on the channel.

The main characteristic of IRC interaction is written expression (typing in the window), which follows the rules of spoken discourse. Thoughts or, rather, words in the window flow as a direct, immediate reply to the previously uttered (but, in fact, written) statement. The expression follows the code of spoken language, since the communication participant has only a moment more to react to the written statement than he has in oral communication. This is basically a hybrid form between spoken and written communication, which from the traditional point of view means a novelty in communication.

2b. MUDs introduce a category of space in communication, since the interaction (albeit written) takes place in a particular room (dungeon),[15] which the participant must get familiar with and discover the role of individual pseudonyms in it. Typically, every participant has an imaginary name, which changes according to the concept of the game, if he is able to search certain rooms and hence, to discover the rules of virtual world. MUDs as a game have a particular mental concept set forth in advance and they put the participants in front of new challenges over and over again. The participant can solve them only in (verbal) cooperation with other imaginary characters who have already acquired certain virtual social roles.

2c. The third option (VRML) – in its point of departure similar to MUD – is technologically most complicated, as it introduces into the communication the elements of graphics and speech. The participant chooses between the graphic images (called avatar),[16] which can be moved around the screen, he meets other imaginary images and talks to them over the microphone.

When examining the characteristics of computer interaction in connection with the relationship *Ego*: the *Other*, one finds out that the categories involved are characteristics of the so-called late avant-garde.

The most important finding is that the individual who participates in any of the aforementioned interactive phenomena, deals with Nil, as in the beginning of the communication he could not possibly have any idea what the

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[15] This is a type of maze – a multi-level game in which the participant, following a previously set up scenario, but in interaction with other players, must solve certain challenges. The more puzzles he solves, the more power he gets, which enables him to participate in setting the rules. In these games usually a virtual community is created, with strictly set virtual social roles that an individual acquires by successfully solving the challenges.

[16] The concept of avatar comes from Hinduism and it means the embodiment of god Shiva. The god Shiva was presented to a certain nation in the form of less abstract deities, avatars. In the case of VRML interaction the concept of avatar should be understood as a process leading to the embodiment (sic) of the abstract image of the participant in communication.

individual symbols on the screen mean, who the person introducing him-/ herself with a certain pseudonym or, rather, hiding under the digital mask, is. Only in the process of communication the individuality of each participant is being built. But it needs to be emphasized that this individual is being built only in a discourse. Under no circumstances does this involve the physical presence of the speaker – it can only involve the imaginary image (avatar). Who is then the subject of communication, how is the relationship toward the *Other* built?

If the O b e r i u i t e reflection bore the idea that the world cannot be replaced by any symbol, consequently leading to *Nil*, to the loss of *Ego*, to the idea of incorporeity, one deals with these categories in computer/Internet communication by definition right from the beginning. Does this indicate a communication process, which is by its psychotypical characteristics the opposite of the introverted masochism? Is Internet interaction an attempt to form new (auto)reflection? Is this a new, only recently unknown way of building one's own identity? What is therefore the psychotypical characteristic of Internet communication?

Virtual reality involves a similar world outlook as outlined in the Oberiuites' literature; a void, an unclear image of characters with respect to their ideal and value systems, ambivalent categories (particularly temporal-spatial coordinates), which are arranged in no previously determined logical order. Despite that, both cases involve establishing value categories. While the Oberiuites (and the literature of absurdity in general) display systematic devaluation of every kind of rational and determining words-markers, Internet interaction attempts to establish some kind of determinism.

Both cases involve a c a r n i v a l i z a t i o n p r o c e s s, in which the expected value relations between the signified and the signifier are becoming lost. However, there is a major difference between the two of them. While the poetics of the Oberiuites, as a rule, involves rationalization of the process that means the loss of collective memory about traditional relationships, electronic communication switches the s i g n: the participant is building the image of the interlocutor as a subject based on successive exchange of markers-words. It needs to be noted that this spoken-written communication involves spatial dislocation between the interlocutors, which prohibits any real physical contact. This fact also prevents us from placing the interlocutor in an actual social context. Since Internet communication does not allow any other contextual connections besides the relationship established by the signifiers on the screen, it is possible to speak of a relative void. The markers on the screen are semantically unburdened in comparison with every-day speech, which is determined by social environment. As if the awareness of collective images and values were agitated or, rather, formed anew. These ideas about one's own identity, which are created as a product of various Internet inter-

actions, are most often in opposition with standard images – therefore, this is a carnivalization process, which represents a new possibility for liberation of one's own *Ego*. Is this a new manifestation of carnivalization in culture, which agitates the canonized ideas about the relationship of an individual vs. the outside world?

It is becoming ever more evident that Internet interaction also involves heteroglossia. Bakhtin's conception of heteroglossia was discussed in connection with the Oberiuites' felling about destruction of *Ego* (the author). While in the era of the Oberiuites heteroglossia means the dissolution of a monolithic (authoritarian, and at the same time clear-cut) statement, which leads to the apology of *Nil*, Internet interaction bears the signs of the constructive period. Only in the selection of various digital masks and in the intertwining of various discourses the participant is building a subject from a complete *Nil*. Although in his search for identity the individual is determined either by his writing (IRC) or by the characteristics of his own speech (VRML), in neither case he is recognized as a member of a real social environment. This fact puts an individual (*Ego*) in a completely different position, since it allows him to realize his desire in a virtual way and, hence, to bypass the majority of prohibitions set forth by the real social norm or the *Ego* him-/herself in the social environment to which s/he belongs.

Internet includes the idea of heteroglossia by virtue of the organization of its system. The simulation of *Ego* in heteromorphic body shapes, offered by VRML technology, also allows a simultaneous use of several digital masks. This multiplicity realizes the idea of heteroglossia in practice, since it allows constant exchanges or changes of communicative situations. The user of the Net from the world of countless possibilities (which is, from a realistic point of view, *Nil*), chooses the type of communication which at a given moment brings him closest to the realization of his desire. Therefore, the individual's communication taking place in the virtual world is much more r e a l than the communication in social reality.

This carnivalizing ambivalence, this intertwining of virtual and real – symptomatically c u l m i n a t e s in the image, a picture of a body, that, as a logical consequence of communication, the participant builds about the *Other*. This process needs to be understood as a careful search around the *nil* (the Net), whether the proposed picture taking shape in the imagination will experience a reflection, which will secure the possibility of one's own subjectivity. In this search for similarity with one's own imagination (which strengthens faith in one's own vision of truth) the previously absurd *nil* is now offering the possibility of the search for one's own identity.[17]

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[17] Most participants in the cybernetic communication belong to the younger generation.

The Net as a fundamental *Nil* offers an illusion of everything and an individual chooses an image and a role in it, which represents a therapeutic opportunity for a person to create his/her own identity in a real world. A digital mask in the Net offers an ideal opportunity for establishing virtual socialization, since it provides *Ego* with a warrant, which exactly for the safety that it offers, eases the steps towards the approval, appropriateness, and possibility of one's own reflection in actual reality. It is becoming clear that Internet interaction replaces previously known forms of communication, which build values mainly in the relationship towards national identity, and builds interaction based on the psychological characteristics of the participants.[18]

The aforementioned characteristics indicate a psychotypical evolutional phase closely related to the introverted masochism of the late avant-garde. However, these characteristics have a different value in Internet interaction, i.e., one can observe the switch of diametrical opposites, which was, considering Bakhtin's conception of carnivalization, characterized above as a constant feature of the evolution of culture.

If the loss of one's own *Ego*, identity, and corporeity – with heteroglossia and carnivalization characterizing the process of subject's (author's) destruction – are typical of the psycho-logic of the introverted masochism, their values are switched in Internet communication. This communication is characterized from the very beginning by a non-defined (desolate, hollowed-out) *Ego*, trying to constitute itself with respect to the *Other* (the outside

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The reason for that is most likely in the fact that this generation has not found its place in real – social environment, which, by connecting people who think in a similar way (generation- and ideal-wise), tests the appropriateness and acceptability of its world view, without regard to their national-cultural affiliation. The Net has a particularly important role in the social groups that are setting themselves free of the axiomatic social patterns of behavior, still strongly present in their conscience (mainly due to totalitarian systems), and within these transitional societies to those marginal cultural groups who view themselves outside, i. e., on the edge, of society. The cybernetic communication offers greater affirmation of their own truth and helps them realize their desires in the reality. As a typical example of these marginal groups, literature most often mentions the homosexual population. In search for and establishment of this group's own *Ego*, the forms of Internet interaction represent an extremely important link in the constitution of its identity. In chatting, where its members are not required to reveal their physical identity, they can freely test their desires and ideas.

[18] The question of going beyond the national viewpoint is not as one-sided as it might seem at first. It should be specially noted that Internet interaction favors and additionally establishes English as, if not the only, then certainly the main language of supra-national communication.

world) in a new way. Searching for his new *Ego*, the participant of Internet interaction is experimenting, i.e., under the cover of digital masks, characterized by various discourses, he is building the image of himself. In this process the individual characteristics are re-encoded with respect to the general, which is gradually built in the process of communication, in the *cross-section* of individual statements. This way a new, psychologically motivated value system is gradually built through the common interaction. In the created heteroglossia, that is made possible by the Net, a different subject is being built. This difference emerges from the interaction which is narcissistic by its nature, since, based on the similarity/difference with the *Other*, the participant is enforcing mainly the awareness of the meaning or value of his own image. Therefore, could Internet interaction be considered a m i r r o r o r n a r c i s s i s t i c p s y c h o t y p i c a l p h a s e in the evolution of culture?

The psychotypical characteristic of the subject in Internet communication at the same time means the establishment of dual or multi-layered image of the subject. In creating the virtual image of the *Other*, conditioned by the expectations and the image of the *Ego* itself, a s y m b i o s i s is created between the virtual and the actual. It is common for the participant to begin adopting the virtual image he built in communication – as the actual reality, i. e., as the realization of his desire.[19] Does the elimination of the dividing line between the virtual and the actual reality, this symbiosis, mean the manifestation of the s c h i z o p h r e n i c p s y c h o t y p e?

It is interesting that, according to Smirnov, both psychotypical manifestations under discussion are the basic characteristics constituting the typology of Postmodernism. Smirnov sees the precursor of Postmodernism precisely in Bakhtin's conception of carnivalization, which he understands as an expression of the other (unusual) manifestation of man. This manifestation frees

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[19] These two statements by the participants of virtual interaction are symptomatic: "I was on the game talking to people about my problems endlessly [...] I find it a lot easier to talk to people on the game about them because they're not there. I mean, they are there but they're not there. I mean, you could sit there and you could tell them about your problems and you don't have to worry about running into them on the street the next day" (*Turkle S.* Life on the Screen. New York, Simon&Schuster, 1995. P. 198). "The more I do it, the more I feel I need to do it. Every couple of days I'd notice, it's like, 'Gee, in the last two days, I've been on this MUD for the total of probably over twenty-eight hours'… I mean I'd be on the MUD until I fell asleep at the terminal practically, and then go to sleep, and then I'd wake up and I'd do it again" (Ivi). Sh. Turkle claims that MUDs work as mediators for the realization of fantasy, which the participant projects into the virtual world: "Stewart's MUD serves as a medium for the projection of fantasy, a kind of Rorschach. But it is more than Rorschach, because it enters into his everyday life. Beyond expanding his social world, MUDs have brought Stewart the only romance and intimacy he has ever known" (Ivi. P. 194).

him of self-centeredness, since he leaves his body to the so-called *collective body*.[20] This process, which should be understood as a liberation of the self from the standard psycho- and socio- clichés, does not involve only one, homogenous historical time, since a person in his/her hetero-morphic nature lives in several worlds and several chronotopi. The logic of communication does not follow the rules of the linear, cause-and-effect sequence. Rather, it is possible to talk about simultaneous existence and intertwining of several individual histories, in which the image (like in Internet interaction) is de-centralized and foggy because of the simultaneous existence of various communication strings.

Because of the simultaneous multi-level and heteromorphic reflection of *Ego*, established and provided by the Internet, it shows the psychotypical characteristic of a symbiotic. Symbiosis is characteristic of Postmodernism in general. In Smirnov's opinion, Postmodernism is, despite its highly developed self-reflection, basically partial, noticeable as a narcissistic or schizoid activity of the spirit. Also, Smirnov continues, it is typical of Postmodernism that the aforementioned activities complement each other, that they are, in fact, symbiotic, but in their conviction about the true nature of their (partial) reflection they do not recognize in each other their organic connection.[21]

Similarly, Internet interaction features the symbiosis based in narcissoid psychotype and by adding value to virtual communication it is intertwined with the characteristics of schizoidness. It is obvious that in Internet communication the psychocharacter of Postmodernism is being materialized.

The widespread and growing popularity of Internet communication, which is moving into the private sphere,[22] means living *Postmodernism* in everyday life, which also indicates the so-called familiarization of postmodern theory, about a theory moving into real life. As if Internet interaction materialized the theoretical findings about the replacement of the cultural psychotype in the actual reality and indicated the emerging cultural phase. By all indicators, the previous relationships are going to be re-evaluated in it and meta-literature about Internet communication will gratefully refer to the

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[20] "При этом карнавалность-чудовищчность выступает для М. М. Бахтина как второе бытие субъекта, освобождающегося от замкнутости на себя и уступающего свое тело 'коллективному телу' […] 'Я' дуалистично: оно само тожественно, с одной стороны, а с другой – равновелико всему нечеловеческому. […] Поэтому 'я' находит в себе и вокруг себя Д р у г о е с у б ъ е к т н о г о, которое и есть чудовищное" (*Смирнов И.* Психодиахронологика. С. 333).

[21] *Смирнов И.* Психодиахронологика. С. 322.

[22] According to the findings by Sherry Turkle (*Life on the Screen*) the majority of users logs on the Net from home.

avant-garde understanding of the subject and the world, which was marked with a similar feeling of Nil as it is typical of the Internet. One can only guess whether this means the value switch in understanding the ever vital relation-ship *Ego* (individual) vs. the *Other* (the outside world). It can only be assu-med that in the given situation Internet interaction is a sign of the construc-tive phase in building the subject as opposed to the late phase of avant-garde, in which heteroglossia and carnivalization were symptoms of a demolished identity. At the present time nobody can know how the subject which will emerge as a cross-section of various virtual-realistic reflections, is going to be evaluated.

At the conclusion of this paper some observations about human psycho-logical development should be added. Psychological theories (Smirnov's theory being one of them) claim that the first developmental stage in a child's auto-reflection is born in narcissism and schizoidness. Only the next phase brings the possibility for the synthesis of the two. In this – symbiotic – phase the connection with the physiological (= body) specifics of the human being only begins to emerge.[23] Are we really witnessing the first developmental stages in Internet interaction, which indicate a new, emergent manifestation of the *individuum*?

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[23] *Смирнов И.* Психодиахронологика. С. 348.