

FROM THE BOOK TO THE INTERNET
(AND WHAT DOES BAKHTIN HAVE TO DO WITH IT?)

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The point of departure for this paper is the idea that there were three similar evolutionary phases in 20th c. culture. The first is marked by the transition from the word to picture and sound (film and television) in the first half of the century; the second one is connected with the rise of the personal computer in the 1980's, while the third one is defined by the unimagined proliferation of the global communication network, known in the nineties as the Internet. All of these stages are critically marked by a similar communication process in the culture itself or, rather, between the culture and its consumer or recipient. Specific to this process is its transition from an autocratic, authoritarian utterance to a democratic one. If, in defining these categories, we depart from the conception of linguistic communication as outlined in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory, it would be possible to say that we are dealing with the distinction between a so called monologic (authoritarian) and dialogic (democratic) orientation of discourse.

According to Bakhtin, the monologically oriented word is typical of poetry genres, while polyphony, heteroglossia, inner dialogism is typical of prose or, more precisely, of a novel of the second stylistic line (see Бахтин 1975:72-233), which evolved into an artistically complete, dialogic artistic creation in the literature of F. M. Dostoevsky (Бахтин 1972). The novel oriented towards the present, but with totally changed temporal coordinates, that speaks of a new literary image connected with contemporaneity, is a genre that in the most profound way breaks up various discourses inside a discourse itself (see Бахтин 1975). What Bakhtin has in mind here is, of course, heteroglossia and the inner dialogism of discourse, clearly represented by the syntagms *речь в речи* and *речь о речи*.¹ A literary character is constituted as an individual by the intertwining (break-up) of various utterances.

¹ In the paper the explanation of Bakhtin's well-known theoretical items is avoided. Therefore, different kinds of inner monologism are not specifically discussed.

It is clear from Bakhtin's conception that a subject is only constituted in context, which is defined mainly by discourse interaction. Several different utterances imply plurality, several perspectives, heteroglossia, which is considered a sign of democracy in culture itself as well as in social theory. On the other hand, the idea that a variety of perspectives on a given subject or heteroglossia make the conceptualization of a given subject/action, and, as a consequence, of a person as an individual hazy – sounds somewhat paradoxical, although it has been confirmed in practice.² The more different utterances/opinions we hear, the harder it is to form an idea about a subject and the greater the doubt in assessing it. This thought is essential in understanding the main phenomena in the 20th c. culture: an individual in the cross section of various utterances becomes de-placed, full of doubts about himself, without a clearly defined value system.

Bakhtin's polyphony which speaks of a process of liberating a literary character from the author's authority and make literature as democratic as possible, leads consequently to a dead end: a character that used to have a clear ideological profile becomes, due to various contextual utterances, increasingly heterogeneous, non-defined and elusive. As such, it ceases to exist as a classic literary character, which eventually leads to its (self-)elimination.³

This process pointed out a long time ago by critics first appeared in literature, can be observed in other spheres as well. A confrontation of the word (literature) with picture and/or sound in the 20th c. renews the process that leads from monologically oriented discourse to dialogic discourse, from monolithic conception to democratic options, from an ideologically clearly readable film character to more and more blurry and diffuse pictures of the character, relativizing his value as a character in the classic sense of the word. Within this evolutionary stage I am more interested in the process experienced by a recipient (viewer) than I am in the evolution of a film character itself. If a motion picture determines a viewer's position – a viewer has to buy a ticket for aesthetic pleas-

2 This idea ties this discussion to the information theory or/and to media studies.

3 An illustrative example of this kind of self-elimination can be observed in the Russian literature of the 1970's and 1980's – in soc-art or Russian conceptualism.

ure, and at a certain time he has to come to the place where the film will be shown. This kind of determination can be understood as a specific phenomenon of a monologic relationship. Undoubtedly, the system of the motion picture puts a viewer in a dependent and passive position. An important change in the relationship towards the viewer is established by television, which signals the first stage of democratization. Now the viewer can choose when he is going to turn the TV on and watch a film, and he will not even have to change location, he can view the film at home. This process of democratization eliminates temporal-spatial distance presented by a motion picture. Television, which means a transfer of picture and sound into privacy, is a process which would in Bakhtin's terminology be called familiarization, which is certainly (and also according to Bakhtin) a sign of democracy. A new stage in this process is brought about with the development of cable and satellite TV. A viewer can choose from various programs as well as from various discourses, on the same subject each in its own, different way.

If Bakhtin's idea that an individual's identity is constituted in discourse contexts is true, then the opportunity to choose from various TV programs is also a hardship for the viewer. In his search among different, yet similar options, a viewer is lost or begins doubting the authenticity, the truth of things that were said or seen. Understandably, this fundamental doubt also makes the viewer's reflection harder. The totality that once existed starts to crumble in this relationship as well. A feeling of heterogeneity penetrates the consciousness with increasing intensity. His own image becomes more blurred, dispersed and fragmented.

The above outline, which one could justifiably call a short course in postmodernism is, in fact, a framework for understanding communication that in the 1980's and 1990's has been fundamentally marked by the computer. Following the basic proposition, in this cultural phase it should also be possible to find similarities connecting a process of computer communication with the process of democratization that literature and film/television had undergone before. In the first phase of computer literacy, which also meant the penetration of the computer into private life (Personal Computer) we are dealing with a system structured in a complex way, a system that computer enthusiasts get excited about while discovering the laws of its functioning. At that time the most

widely used computer operational system (DOS) worked according to the principles of logically built structure. To move to more complex computer operations, we always have to perform specific commands first, which allow a more complex form of communication. Yet it is a form of communication that is planned and predictable in advance. In communication with the computer its user (note the distinction reader/viewer/user) has to follow strict rules, to make this communication (and application, for which the use of computer is intended) possible. Better knowledge of structural rules, which the computer operates with, brings greater success in its use. Therefore, at the early stage of computer technology, its user in specific way repeats the method known to structuralism.

In discovering the principles of computer communication, the user attempts to reduce the complexity of a machine to the main repeatable constituents of this communication and to discover basic communication principles among them. Therefore, from the standpoint of formalism this process could be called "laying the process bare" (обнажение приема). This attempts to discover the dominating feature, and its knowledge eases the understanding of the rules in computer communication. This communication with a computer is monologic by nature, reduced to the understanding of the elements and their relationships in a logically built hierarchical system of computer signs. In the event, if the user does not follow the order of commands or changes them, any communication is impossible. The computer system is built according to the principle of linearity, a temporally fixed repetition of signs planned in advanced. This emphasizes the monolithic character and hierarchically arranged structure of the machine, which strictly determines the guidelines of communication. This process, in which one could discover characteristics of modernistic aesthetics (see Turkle 1995), begins to change radically at the end of the 1980's with the rise of a new program system known as Windows. To be precise, the radical change comes about with Windows 95, which becomes an operational system by itself. The roles were switched: while previous variants of Windows worked as application within DOS, now the once predominant operational system exists only as archaic remains – as an application within Windows 95.

What is the change that fundamentally modified the communication with a computer? The first conclusion is based on a fact that will be supported by computer experts themselves. If it was possi-

ble to deconstruct DOS and get excited about the knowledge that a computer expert possessed because of his understanding of structural rules, Windows 95 does not provide this kind of pleasure. Windows 95 is a system that cannot be reduced to a few basic rules, the idea about their structure is blurry, foggy – even for a computer expert. The second conclusion is about the radical change in communication between the user and the computer brought about by Windows 95. While a command line appears in front of the DOS user, where he has to fill in the appropriate word/sign, so that after a certain linearly structured sequence a certain application will be performed, in Windows 95 numerous icons appear on the screen. The user does not have to type commands in successive sequence, instead, he has only to choose a certain icon and the operational system does everything else necessary for a certain application to operate.

Even more, several applications can exist on the screen simultaneously, their existence depending only on a click on the appropriate picture/icon. Again, the association with the TV remote control is symptomatic. With the introduction of Windows as a basic operational system a similar process is happening in communication as we were able to observe in the transition from motion picture to television or in growing TV network system. Just like motion picture (as a linear, temporally determined communication) was at one time (i.e., with the rise of TV networks) transformed into only one of the options simultaneously offered by various TV networks, the monologic operational system, DOS, changed into only one of the options offered on the screen by Windows 95. Just as many times in history the temporal aspect was overshadowed by the spatial aspect, the computer technology confirmed the process that has been demonstrated as an archetypal constant: polyphony, which implies decentralization and dehierarchization of everything monolithic. This means preference for the spatial aspect, i.e., it erases temporal boundaries between the individual phenomena and/or utterances.⁴ Computer communication, too, (similarly to

4 It is not a coincidence that Bakhtin as well, in his understanding of polyphony emphasizes the importance of space and/or spatial perspective in works by Dostoevsky. Hence, taking Bakhtin's findings into account, the Bakhtinian and Dostoevskyian scholar Aleksander Skaza writes: "Dostoevsky saw and reflected his world in a space. In his works he attempted to organize all intellectual material from reality in a short period of time and to develop it ex-

TV) mostly depends on the user (viewer), who chooses between options, browsing with a mouse on a screen (or with a finger on a remote control). Windows by its character is therefore a mechanism which has basically built in the idea of heteroglossia – the user decides, according to his preference, which forms of communication (application) he will use. Among these applications there is also phenomenon of inner dialogics, since the program system can interactively respond to the user's command or utterance. It can consider it and offer him several options for the continuation of the communicative operation (cf. the role of the "Wizard" or "Assistant" in Office 97). Within Windows 95 this dialogism becomes essential, since the user can get lost among numerous options offered by the program system. At times, this can result in a negative attitude towards a computer and towards the utility of the program system.

If we interpret the statements on being lost in front of the computer in a different way, it is possible to say that the conversion of the monolithic and monologic computer system into a multifaceted (polyglotic) mechanism present an average user with an obstacle: previously learned machine rules are outdated. There are so many possibilities opened up by the new program system that the user trying to communicate with them can proceed only half-way. The user's communication in the decentralized world of the computer program system is only fragmentary, creating feelings of unease and powerlessness. Needless to say, postmodern criticism talks

tensively in a form of dramatic comparison. Understanding the world meant to Dostoevsky comprehending all its characteristics, its evolutionary stages as simultaneous, and to present them from the standpoint of a single moment" (see Skaza 1982).

Interestingly, Jola Škulj in her article on the question of conceptualization of the modernistic novel, also treats spatial form (spatialization) as the basic identifying category of modernistic prose. In her treatment she compares the notion of spatialization in J. Frank (*Spatial Form in Modern Literature*) with Bakhtin's notion of dialogism and comes to the conclusion "that the notions of spatial form and dialogic discourse imply a type of thinking that differs from the thinking belonging to logocentrism; furthermore, they presuppose [...] the understanding of truth as *aporetic* or as the interaction indicated by the word "dialogue" or the notion "double" in Kristeva's work. [...] In fact, spatiality as well as dialogism, if we follow Bakhtin's formulations, presuppose an entirely decentralized consciousness" (see: Škulj 1988).

about the diffused ego in the world of multiplicity, heteroglossia and fragmentedness.

These observations allow us to talk about repeatable phases of cultural development in various historical periods. A similar process that leads from monologism (monolithness) to polyphony in a literary work, happens in real life (of a viewer) at the transition from motion picture to global TV network. Just as from the viewer's point of view TV entails more choices, but it also places greater responsibility on him in judging the material that he, as a consequence, accepts as true and good, so the contemporary computer program system creates ever more complete and complex illusions of something that is supposed to be, in fact, also true. The more informative (in a broad sense of the word) the computer communication, the more complete the impact of word, sound and image/picture combination on the user, the sooner the user will choose the proffered form of information or, rather, the reality established by it, from among numerous options. There is no doubt any more that computer communication has influenced the transformation of man's identity in a profound way. The most noticeable modification of personality is created by a new form of communication with the computer, known as the Internet (the network of networks). This communication, again, is formed according to previously mentioned evolutionary phases.

If we ignore the more or less outdated communication Internet protocols (e.g., Gopher, Archive), the first important step towards mass communication is represented by the World Wide Web. This basic form of Internet communication reproduces the basic rules of writing. When we log on to a Web server we read a text from it that is organized in a similar way as any other text. The communication that we establish with this text is by its nature monologic and depends only on the context of the web page. In principle it does not say anything about the specifics of a particular utterer's point of view. The attitude towards the text on a Web server changes radically with the use of HTML language or, rather hypertext, allowing the user in-depth insight. Behind a marked (hypertext) link an endless number of contextual connections are hidden. Therefore, the marked utterance loses its monologic character, in the context of endless possibilities opened by hypertext, the meaning of the (hyper)sign and the entire text is relativized. The hypertextual phase of Internet communication marks the tran-

sition in understanding of the text as a conclusive whole/totality or as a monologic system to the idea of dissipation, fragmentedness and inconclusiveness of the text fostered by most post-structuralist theoreticians (Landow 1992).

A comparison with other forms of communication in the culture allows us to conclude that like others, the hypertext phase is not based on a principle of linearity, but it opens a possibility of endless choices and connections. The relationship is based, similarly to communication through the TV network or Windows, on the idea of spatial navigation, allowing simultaneous juxtaposition outside temporal determination and without hierarchy determined in advance. Understandably, the hypertext phase of communication explicitly realizes the principle of dialogism, heteroglossia, i.e., at this place of never-ending dialogue the figure of the author disappears and, as a consequence, also the subject as an entity with an evident ideological position disappears. To conclude we can say something similar to what we asserted with respect to the user-computer relationship in Windows 95. A person surfing on WWW feels confused and lost, faced with the endless choice of possibilities. How can he discover a possible identity that is going to give him a meaning, in the ever elusive and changing possibilities?

In the search for parallels between various stages of culture it can be noticed that the process of decentralization, polyphony and democratization in its extreme phase led to crumbling of identity, loss of one's own ego, relativization of values or to their abolishment. If Internet communication is understood within this paradigm, established by postmodern criticism, it seems a real paradox that internationally the use of Internet is growing by leaps and bounds.

If at every dominant stage of communication in the 20th c. culture there is a transition from an ideologically profiled utterance defining an individual (character) as a subject, towards noticeable decentricity, dissipation of ego (and, as a consequence, to fogginess, which is often used to characterize the time we live in), then in the era of the Internet this dissipated ego is encountered from the very beginning. An example is the method of Internet communication known as IRC, MUD (MUSH, MOO). The main point of Internet chat (Internet Relay Chat) is in the fact that the user can log on the channel where under a pseudonym he builds – along with other real users – a virtual identity derived from his real and inti-

mate needs and desires. In principle, verbal communication (IRC) becomes much more complex and challenging with the rise of MUD (Multiple User Domains - Dimensions) and similar communication formats. MUD is by its nature a game – a maze (Dungeon)⁵ in which users construct their own identities according to fixed rules, so that they would with corporate effort solve the puzzle and finish the interactive game. MUD does not entail only verbal simulation, since the participant takes over and builds an image/character on the screen, moves it around and in this way creates/directs a form of screen play. Unlike an "adventurous MUD" the other type (a social MUD") is based on creating one's own rules and own virtual world, in which the participants build a virtual state (MOO). Regardless of the type of interactive communication, the participant creates his identity in a dialogue (mainly verbal) with other participants. A theoretical possibility of being logged on to several channels simultaneously (or the possibility of creating several characters simultaneously within one MUD) allows several different virtual subjects to be built. These are always formed through the cross section of concrete polylogues – through various discourses. Therefore, building virtual identities is a clear example of the postmodernist explanation that the ego must be understood in the sphere of discourse.

Internet interactive communication is becoming a form of social laboratory for experimenting with forms of one's ego. Various simulations offer possibilities of understanding the complexity of the world in which a person builds his identity on a basis undetermined by a system of rules and social codes outlined in advance. The creation of a mental construct in which a person with the aid of a computer constructs a truth about himself, interacting with similar utterances from other participants, implies an idea of absolute freedom. Options in creating one's own (virtual) identity are unlimited. He can now construct virtual subjects which he cannot create or is afraid to create in reality. This offers the possibility that the person, enriched with the experiences from virtual dialogue, can free himself from real problems in communicating, his com-

5 At first the acronym MUD stood only for Multi-User Dungeon.

plexes and traumas. Thus interactive communication represents a kind of autotherapy for the lost ego.⁶

In interactive communication on the Internet the process of narration is different, since the existence of an adopted-fantasy image is defined by an intimate (safe) *mis-en-scène* (staging). The moment he is uncomfortable, the person can simply interrupt communication, without virtual communication affecting the real continuum in any way. Virtual subjects know real communication only through their discourse. This virtual identity, free from limitations and prohibitions, actually talks about reality under the mask of virtuality – about real desires, needs and inclinations that are revealed from the virtual polylogue.⁷ If I can borrow Bakhtin's idea that every utterance is ideological or teleological, then it can be assumed that the utterance in virtual communication is free of most sublime forms. Recognizing (systemic) similarities in virtuality

6 Cf. a rumination of a MUD participant, quoted by S. Turkle: "I like to put myself in the role of a hero, usually one with magical powers, one on MUD, start a few conversations going, put out a question or two about MUD matters, and ask people to drop off replies to me in a special in-box I built in my mud 'office'. Then I put my character to sleep and go off and do some work. Particularly if I'm in some conflict with someone at work it helps to be MUDding, because I know that when I get back to the MUD I'll probably have some appreciative mail waiting for me. Or sometimes I use a few rounds of MUD triumphs to psych myself up to deal with my boss" (Turkle 1995:189).

7 These two statements by the participants in 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 1995:198) "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" (Turkle, *ibid.*). S. Turkle concludes that MUDs work as mediators for realization of fantasies that 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" (Turkle 1995:194).

should therefore also mean a qualitative stage in building one's own sovereignty and autonomy in reality.

The undreamed of proliferation of Internet tools has led to an evolutionary phase that is comparable to the evolutionary stages in culture: a conglomeration of word, picture and sound. In the near future a total simulation will be created in which virtual characters will be connected through the network into a continuum composed of real images (seen on the screen) and real sound (sounds). This idea derives its credibility from unequivocal statements by the representatives from large computer corporations (Microsoft, Intel) about their development strategies, all of which include the expansion of the video-conference system. The first attempts towards total communication have already been made with some varieties of the Internet video telephone or, rather, with simpler interactive audio/video tools (Cuseeme).

If the communication of the 1980's, marked by the computer, in the beginning of the century was a process leading from word to picture and sound to create a film that can be observed, then this process is being repeated with Internet communication, and with remarkable speed. Along with these parallels one can see a continuation in the process of increasing television viewership during the 1960's and 1970's. For this process I borrow a term from Bakhtin's theory: familiarization. This means a way of profaning everything which was high, ideal and abstract (monologic – author's remark), to down-to-earth and tangible. Familiarization means, by its nature, a manner of democratization, a realization of polyphony in life. Therefore, the process of media democratization in the 20th c. also means a process of familiarization. The era of television and personal computer in fact means that technology is coming closer to, or is breaking into, the world of privacy (home). Television and computer have already become a virtually indispensable way of forming one's privacy and personality. The process of familiarization has obviously reached its highest stage with Internet communication. Friendship with the computer is not the same as interaction with television. Similarly, with hypertext communication (HTML), in interactive communication (IRC, MUD) a person is not just a passive participant of a certain, theoretically possible and once structured event (as seen by, for instance, an author of the TV show or a film director). A participant in interactive Internet communication constructs the event as an author among authors

(character among characters, subject among subjects). His real capability (or incapability) to structure himself as a virtual, seeming subject is again shown in a cross section of entirely real utterances or, rather, of real interaction. A tight bond is established between a computer (which allows the establishment of virtuality in an entirely real way) and a participant. This could be justifiably called the highest degree of familiarization. In Bakhtin's theory, familiarization is closely connected with the concept of carnivalization or, rather, a grotesque attitude towards the world, which is characterized by constant dynamicity of unity of diametrical opposites or by a dual (ambivalent) view in comprehending the world of human life (see: Бахтин 1972:206-207; Бахтин 1965:15-16).⁸ The new social experience brought about by the Internet is being created in the cross section of two continuums (real and virtual) and is by its nature extremely ambivalent and grotesque. Similarly to Bakhtin's findings about the carnival – as the purest form of grotesque attitude towards the world – the participants do not perform in the interactive communication, but they live it.⁹ Between real and virtual communication a web is being created where boundaries between levels are being eliminated: a dual word (двумирность) is being created. This phenomenon also has a function similar to the function carnival forms used to have in the culture of various periods.

8 According to Bakhtin, the principle of dialogism is realized in forms of folk culture of laughter or in forms of carnival culture. J. Kristeva (*Desire in Language*), too, understands these forms as something that despises causality and identity and exists only in relationships or through them. Dialogism and carnival presuppose language that tries to escape the linearity – lawfulness. (see: Škulj 1988).

9 It is interesting and indicative that the attempts to realize virtual relationship in real life (i.e., to terminate dual world) usually end unsuccessfully, which is also pointed out by S. Turkle: "In a second phase, players commonly try to take things from the virtual to the real and are usually disappointed. Peter, a twenty-eight-year-old lecturer in comparative literature, thought he was in love with a MUDding partner who played Beatrice to his Dante (their characters' names). Their relationship was intellectual, emotionally supportive, and erotic. Their virtual sex life was rich and fulfilling. The description of physical actions in their virtual sex (or TinySex) was accompanied by detailed descriptions of each of their thoughts and feelings. It was not just TinySex, it was TinyLovemaking. Peter flew from North Carolina to Oregon to meet the woman behind Beatrice and returned home crushed. "[On the MUD] I saw in her what I wanted to see. Real life gave me too much information" (Turkle 1995:207).

While they were degrading the monolithic character of a hierarchical system, they were, on the other hand, dynamizing it, hence, actualizing it anew. It is impossible to ignore the fact that at that time governments tolerated the carnival, even supported it and played a strictly defined role in it. The carnival juxtapositions, where every participant could put on a mask of his choice, reflected the idea of an upside-down world. The change of value signs, of social function and one's identity in effect led to the strengthening of existing ideas about the arrangement of the world and the relationships in it – as they exist in real world. Isn't it possible to understand the virtual world in a similar way – this upside-down world at the end of the 20th c. – as an attempt to strengthen the meaning and value of real relationships?

It seems that the Internet most clearly realizes those theoretical elements of postmodern conceptions that are connotated by Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia, carnivalization, dehierarchization, familiarization, etc. These Bakhtinian terms, each in their own way, speak of the same – about the transition of centralized (monologic) utterance to decentralized (dialogic) one. This process, which is usually illustrated in sociological terminology as a transition from autocracy, totalitarianism to democracy, marks the dominant phase of cultural evolution in the 20th c. Plurality and heteroglossia (heterogeneity), synonyms for democracy, together with the intensive pace in technology profoundly marked the conception of the subject-individual. At the beginning, the process indicating the disintegration of literary character into several realities (utterances), which led to the devaluation and elimination of the literary subject in the classical poetological sense of the word, could be observed only in literature. Later on, this process was repeated in the relationship film/television – viewer and computer – user. The multitude of heterogeneous images, most often composed of fragments of verbal utterances, which preclude the individual from complete reflection, leads to a dispersed subject, fragmentedness, loss of totality, crisis of identity, etc. Doesn't this similarity and parallelness in evolutionary phases speak for recurring structural laws, realized and actualized in culture in certain temporal stages in similar way?

Despite the fact that the forms of Internet communication clearly perform previously repeated and repeatable characteristics,

they also open a new phase of communication, that is to say, an opportunity for a new evaluation of one's self. An innovation in this communication is the fact that an individual does not appear in it in a role that would already inherently indicate an a priori destroyed image of one's own ego. A person, entirely liberated of a real social role has, in cyberspace (in this vacuum without any markers), a choice of countless possibilities. This theoretical vacuum creates an illusion of total freedom, inviting a creation of an ideal virtual state, where a person begins to create his own subject, starting from scratch and capable of achieving anything.

If we accept these observations as valid, and if we connect them with the findings regarding the growing use of the Internet, we can explain all this as a constructional phase in identity building. A communication participant is becoming an author of a new collective text, where his future characteristics are now being built. Heterogeneity, variety, fragmentedness and polyphony are becoming the signs of the creative phase, since a person creates the relationship entirely according to his own choice, originating from his own desire, need or inner impulse. This relationship, which attempts to suppress some social or historical experience, is in principle free, democratic and, as such, it offers the possibility of constructing a new identity.

Whether this self-therapeutic relationship in a final consequence means the awakening of the individual to a new value system or if it only means the intensification of postmodern schizoidness, for now remains anyone's guess.

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