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Post Modern Identity: "In Between" Real And Virtual

Joanna Kasza

Institute of Culture, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland

E-mail address: joanna.kasza@o2.pl

ABSTRACT

The article focus on the phenomena of the 'radical change' (transformation) brought by new ICT technologies, associated with the information and communication revolution, both on the level of the collective: bringing disruptive changes within economic, social and cultural sphere, and on the level of the individual, evoking fundamental, yet subtle, changes within our psyche impacting our identity (ies). The multiple scientific discourses, when analyzing the impact of new technologies, usually focus on changes in the economic, social or cultural sphere, defining them within the context of its semantic field (resulting different explanatory models built around different theoretical concepts, together with the accompanying different methodology). The main hypothesis of the 'radical change' (transformation) brought by new technologies, usually described in reference to new paradigm change, refers to constantly increasing impact (direct mediation) of ICT technologies in almost all spheres of our lives: social, economical and cultural, but hardly ever discuss the extremely subtle reconfiguration of our psychological space made under the influence of new technologies. As such the article focuses mainly the impact of new technologies upon the psyche and post-modern identity, trying to fully grasp and understand both the visible (direct) and the invisible (subtle) changes, from the perspective of psychological approach, with special reference to Jung's analytical psychology. The core element (novelty) is the attempt to fully grasp (understand) the phenomena of moving (living) 'in between' real and virtual (identity/ environment), mainly from the point view (implications) of psychological as well as philosophical (ontological), not as in majority of cases (discourses) from the technological, economical, sociological perspective. Cultural anthropology evokes the concept of liminality to denominate the boundaries between two different states : functioning within the existing normative (institutional) governance and stepping outside or aside of it, meaning suspension of the existing norms and standards (and break in or pause within the existing culture). The post-modern individual is somehow forced to move 'in between' and experience two different environments simultaneously - the physical environment, embedded in real space and time continuum, where we live at the very moment and digital environment created by new technologies (virtual and/or digital space). As such this continuous transition from reality to virtuality evokes the characteristics (attributes) of the liminal

experience. Critical analysis of the defined phenomena implies the need of interdisciplinary approach based on the comparative methodology, both from the point view of theoretical discourses as well as more empirical approach, based mainly on the interdisciplinary approach of Jungian Analytical Psychology, as the outlined theme moves 'in between' new technologies, culture (as well as economy or social science) and psychology.

*Keywords***:** post-modern identity, paradigm shift, liminality, 'virtual identity, simulacra and simulation, virtual reality, real virtuality

1. IMPACT OF ICT TECHNOLOGIES: PARADIGM CHANGE - ON THE LEVEL OF THE COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL

When talking about information and communication revolution, associated with the third wave of globalization, which Marshal McLuhan described in terms of 'global episteme', we often try to compare it with dynamic changes, that have taken place within the framework of industrial revolution, but in reality we are not capable to refer to them objectively, and fully realize both the scale and scope of undergoing changes. Mainly because they lost not only its linear (cause and effect) but also incidental character long ago, thus becoming not only the permanent phenomenon (an ongoing process), but also a non-linear one, happening in all areas simultaneously and fundamentally changing (transforming): economic, social and cultural sphere, thus evoking effect of synergy and convergence (interference) difficult to predict. This applies in particular to the concept of radical technological breakthrough, which J. Schumpeter wrote about, that they have the power of creative destruction, in which the dynamics changes progressing so fast, that the only known experience becomes a "discontinuity, uncertainty and (constant) change".[b] The new ICT technologies impose such a dynamic to the post-modern world, that become the main sense of fragmentation, ambiguity and uncertainty of the contemporary world as well as individual (identity) as consequences of diversification of language (discourse), characterized by the possibility of adaptation of multiple position to be taken by the individual. As a result, within this diversity and the complexity of cultural patterns through which we interpret the world, and we are being interpreted by, defined in terms of plurality (Leibnitz, Hartman, James), ambiguity (Bauman), or polimitic systems (Marquard), the core issue become the quest for the identity: individual or/and collective, which becomes a fundamental source of social meaning.

Alvin Toffler in Future shock [c] talks about "breaking with the past", in which spatial and temporal restrictions has been aborted (disrupted) thus causing both the existing models (modes of operations) as well as actual descriptions of reality (modes of knowledge) quickly becoming outdated (obsolete). New information and communication technologies confers on

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[b] Diverse approach to understand the contemporary changes within so called post-modern world in refers to impact of ICT technologies embraces different perspectives related with different fields (disciplines) underlying different aspects :the transition from industrial to post-industrial society (Bell 1973), as a result of third wave of globalisation : civilisation development (Toffler 1980), emergence of media society (McLuhan 1962, 1964), informational or knowledge society (Stehr 1994) or network society (Castells 2000) not to mention more sociological approach (Bard & Soderqvist 2002)

[c] According to Toffler (1970) the acceleration of change in our time is, itself, an elemental force, that has personal and psychological (individual) as well as sociological, economical and cultural (collective) consequences, thus leading to 'future shock' shattering stress and disorientation induce upon individuals by subjecting them to too much (too rapid) change in too short a time, or massive adaptational breakdown on the collective side. As such, concept of future shock -and the theory of adaptation that derives from it -strongly suggests balance, not merely between rates of change within different spheres or/and sectors, but rather between the pace of environmental change and the limited pace of human response (potential).

post-modern world such a dynamics, that none of the current repertoires, models or strategies can't be considered as fully closed and effective, instead they rather require constant re-defining (improvement) or/and search for new alternatives. As a result, the syndrome of impermanence (inadequacy) applies not only to the existing models or strategies, or/and institutional arrangements, but also their current form description (knowledge) -this leads to constant recycling ideas and dilemmas of the adequacy of the various trends in economics, sociology or culture for the adequate description of the contemporary process of undergoing changes. We could simply say about dissipation of the current cognitive paradigm, as the intellectual categories used to describe and/or understand the existing reality have been coined in different circumstances, and therefore can hardly grasp what is new by referring to the past. Thus there is the urgency for a new approach to understand the economy, culture, and society in which we live 'here and now', characterized by almost instantaneous flow and exchange of information, capital, and cultural communication. Both the flows and the traffic they carry are largely outside traditional modes & regulation- all becoming diverse expressions of a process of multidimensional, structural and cultural (disruptive) change, overcoming traditional limitations of forms of organization to manage complexity beyond a certain size of the network. [d]

In fact, we could simply talk about the new development paradigm shift, referred by Manuel Castells [e] (2010) in terms of information society, associated primarily with, moving for the first time, beyond the physical limitations of 'time and space'- transition from "space of places" (territorial contiguity) to "space of flows", in which the physical space is partly replaced, partly extended by space of communication: symbolic and virtual. As a result, access (exchange) to goods and services, as well as knowledge and information is almost immediate, available (open access) for all 'here and now' in the virtual & symbolic space "through streams and flows nodes". According to Castells all major social changes are ultimately characterized by a transformation of space and time in the human experience. Assuming that the that space is not a tangible reality, but rather the concept constructed on the basis of human experience, he underlines that "if we look at space as a social form and a social practice, throughout history space has been the material support of simultaneity in social practice" (Castells 2010, s.30). That simply means the development of new ICT technologies radically transformed the spatiality of social interaction by introducing the phenomena of simultaneity or any chosen time frame in social practices, regardless of the location of the actors engaged in the process. Thus moving the whole civilisation from the previous 'space of places', where physical space become the significant barrier limiting development, mainly because that access to goods and services and information or knowledge was limited in time and space (in large part distributed in local communities, and accumulated in the urban space) to the current 'space of flows', where within a global network of communication, the access to goods and services or information and knowledge is almost

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[d] For some digital technologies is conceived as an instrument of 'broader restructuring' of modern society, replacing structure with the flow, hierarchical (knowledge) with horizontal (information) : break away from socioeconomic structures and cultural practices (soft capitalism: more constructive approach) tool for social inclusion and empowerment, participatory democracy and interactive citizenship/access to culture : more Dyson (1998), Leadbeater (1999), Rheingold (2000), Rifkin (2001), Sclove (1995) and mobility or/and liquid modernity : Bauman (2000, 2006) Castells (1996)

[e] Within the diverse literature on that subject there are different concepts defining the next development stage of the economy, including experience economy, knowledge based economy, creative economy (cultural/creative industries) all of the above underlying significant shift towards symbolic goods (culture, information, knowledge) both on the supply and the demand side within economy, as well as predominantly intangible format of symbolic goods (not physical but digital/virtual based on the value of content (content industry) making it a high risk production [Kultura a rozwój 2013]

immediate (instant, interactive and synchronic), and open   access, takes place in 'timeless time' within the 'virtual space through streams and flows'.[f]

  This new paradigm shift, described above in terms of information society, applies not only to modern economy (the transition from the industrial economy to a post-industrial one: from the production of physical goods to the economy of services, mainly intangible, towards symbolic goods) but also, and above all to culture- with the fundamental change of the role and importance of culture, mainly because symbolic goods occupy a central place within information civilization, not the peripheral thus far. This fundamental change does not rely only on the increasing production and consumption of symbolic goods -a significant shift in the direction of symbolic goods, both on the supply (production and ways of production) and the demand side (consumption and the ways of consumption), but rather on the fact, that symbolic sphere takes over the role within the mechanisms of socio-economic development, so far performed by material sphere.[g] As such the basis for symbolic production becomes mainly the capital (value): intellectual, creative, cultural or social - exchange in the process into economic capital (value) along with the new modes of production and consumption of symbolic goods. Within this almost unlimited information and communication space and the possibility of a digital circulation of culture, the culture itself becomes not the dialogue, as often described, but rather the polilog: endless process: a plurality of narratives, interpretations, meanings, values, cognitive, cultural or social codes, thus becoming a point of reference in the world of 'liquid modernity', where discontinuity, uncertainty and constant change become a collective experience.

  The result is a radical transformation of culture as such: a transition from the "culture of scarcity", limited by the physical (technical) realm of production and distribution, to the "culture of excess" almost unlimited information and communication space, where the problem becomes an excess of co-existing   information, knowledge and   symbols (the ubiquity of cultural transfer). In this situation, the digital circulation of culture becomes not only self-renewable, but also self-multiplied (intensified multiplication based on interaction, activity and exchange: the more we use, the more we multiply). As a result the post-modern circuit of culture is characterized by immediate availability and the ubiquity of cultural transfer and diversity, along with the richness of content and availability of choice (convergence of culture along with divergence of technology). Referring to Castells we are witnessing the new culture emerging: 'culture of real virtuality', in which the digitized networks of multimodal communication have become so inclusive of most of cultural expressions and personal experiences, that have made virtuality a fundamental dimension of our reality.[h] The direct result of such emergence or rather technological convergence of ICT

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[f] This new form of spatiality, defined by M. Castells as the space of flows: material support of simultaneous social practices communicated at a distance, embrace both the transmission and processing of flows of information or culture (symbolic goods) as well as the connectivity of active ities located in the local nodes of global communication networks. As such the key feature of the networked connection is the relation, or rather increasing tension, between the local and the global (glocal) : micro-network of the high-level decision-making process, based on the face-to-face relations (space of places) linked to a macro-network of decision implementation, based on global digital communication networks (space of flows) - Castells (2010, s. 37-8)

[g] According to Hausner (2010) within this new paradigm we encounter a fundamental change (shift) within the key development parameters: in place of balance rather the dynamic growth (based on the intellectual, social and creative capital), in place of the market pendulum a spiral movement with the main focus on the institutions at the centre of socio-economic development with the key factor of adaptive efficiency rather than the allocative one. We could say with some simplification, that "the one that is material provides a framework and limitations, while the one that's symbolic becomes a factor stimulus of social and economic change, however, that what's contemporary 'material' and 'symbolic' creates rather inseparable amalgam, there is no one without the other"

[h] According to Rothert (2005) the essence of the new culture emerging: 'culture of real virtuality' (Castells) is the new digital logic or 'CyberNetic order' - contemporary mechanism of control of hybrid units (cyborgs) within the network flow of information and accumulated 'knowledge/power'- referring to the dynamics of complex systems, balancing on the border 'in between' order and chaos, further developing

technologies upon culture is so called 'grand fusion' of integrated multimedia system into a symbolic environment, based "not on the inducement of virtual reality, but (rather) the construction of real virtuality". According to Castells it's a "system in which reality itself (material/symbolic existence) is entirely captured, fully immersed in a virtual image setting, in the world of make believe, in which appearances are not just on the screen, but they become the experience" (2010, s, 402).

2. POST- MODERN INDENTITY : "IN BETWEEN" REAL & VIRTUAL (IDENTITY) - ON THE LEVEL OF INDIVIDUAL

This gives the postmodern culture specific nature, blurring the boundaries between reality and its multiplied reflection (virtual reality), between the original and a copy, the map and the territory in a constant 'precession or flood of simulacra'(a term used by Baudrillard to determine the culture of moving pictures, ideas and images resulting in constantly changing preferences, values or life styles). According to Baudrillard, enhanced multiplication of signs and images has reached such an intensity that has created a new quality: hyper-reality,[i] which only further exacerbated this process: simulacra-sation: decay of any semiotic or metamorphic bond between the physical, psychic, and pictorial (death of the sign - with no real verification possible: blurring of the boundaries between the real, semiotic and symbolic). As a result, post-modern culture is mainly defined by a sense of fragmentation ambiguity and uncertainty of the world as well as confusion, frustration or alienation of the individual (identity), resulting in the constant quest for identity, both individual or/and collective. Of course, it's not a new phenomenon, the search for identity becomes the only source of meaning mainly in times characterized by widespread deconstruction of existing patterns, norms or institutions- in so called conditions of 'structural schizophrenia', tear between the function and meaning, where patterns of social communication are subject to the increasing tensions. This diversity and the complexity of cultural patterns through which we interpret the world, and we are being interpreted by, fundamentally changes our way of perceiving the reality: by defining it in terms of multiplicity, ambiguity (Bauman) and polimitic systems (Marquard) space of flows (Castells) and/or moving ethnoscapes (Appardurai).

Experiencing diversity results in creating so called psycho-cultural nodes or thresholds: moments saturated with meaning (while creating, reading or setting the meaning), strong mediation (taking place often with the help of amplifier of experience), which the individual subjectively recognizes as a 'liminal experience'. As a result, post-modern individual (identity) has to deal with the intensification and multiplication of experiences (lives), that embodies the trend of timeless time and virtual space of flows, with almost exponential change in direction of singularity (acceleration/ transgression of the existing limits/borders). Within post-modern world, both society and culture, is increasingly structured around the binary opposition between the Net and the Self (as a result by the split of the abstract, global

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(evolving) on the base of 'the sudden leap' from one state to another (with the emergence of the new order/level, which becomes a key)– more A. Rothert (2005)

[i] Baudrillard's most recognized book *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981, 1995, 2005) starts from recalling one of Borges' stories, in which cartographers of the Empire have prepared the map so detailed, that it covered precisely (tightly) the whole territory, and then just had fallen apart with the Empire.. According to Baudrillard "abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept.. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory - precession of simulacra - it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges subsist here and there, in the deserts which are no longer those of the Empire, but our own. The desert of the Real itself" (Poster 1988, s.166-184)

instrumentalism of global elites and historically rooted limitations of local identities, embedded in local culture and meaning).[j] Barglow highlights the paradox of modern new technologies (ICT), which on the one hand, increase (augments) human abilities (powers) of organizing and integrating, based on the network structure, while undermining (subverting) the traditional western concept of sovereign, independent individual (identity) on the other. In short, new technologies help to dismantle the same vision of the world, which have supported in the past - "leading to the exclusion/alienation of the self, that existentially alone seems to be irretrievably lost for itself"- and as such search for a new sense of the relations/links (with the world) around thus shared and reduced identity (Castells 2010, s.22).[k] This irrevocably implies the crisis of western individual subjected to continual (on-going) shocks by uncontrolled (glocal) bindings -which, on one hand, cause even stronger return to the traditional, fundamental identities (ethnic, religious) both: individual and collective, on the other push towards searching for new identities, transgressing the existing ones (with the use of advanced technology, digital culture and/or spirituality).

As previously underlined, the main discourses analysing the growing complexity and interdependence of the impact brought by new technologies, usually refer to the economic, social or cultural (changes) spheres (mostly mediated by this new medium), often overlooking very subtle, yet fundamental reconfiguration of psyche (identity), evoked by the influence of new technologies. From the psychological perspective we can observe the visible shift (subtle reconfiguration) of our identity every time we log into the web (digital network) - using metaphor we could simply say, that the seductive power of new technologies becomes 'soft drug', a mean of initiation, that opens the door to 'the virtual world'. This 'brand new world of 'virtual reality or real virtuality' dramatically changes (transforms) our psyche (identity) - within this space we live (new) separate lives, that fundamentally influence the very imaginary of 'who we are': the way we interact (relate) to ourselves, others or the world. Our way of perceiving ourselves or the others - the way we think, feel, sense, communicate or deal with our emotions and desires - in a virtual world differs substantially from what we experience in a real life (though our imaginaries online are transferred to our life offline and vice -versa). Stating that, taking closer look at the psychological analysis most of them focuses mainly on the emotional (virtual relations/encounters in net), social (virtual communities, social media relations/networks), economical (digital shopping/purchase or digital banking) or public aspect (protection of privacy/rights or identity theft/ threats) of new technologies. As a result we often miss subtle reconfiguration of our psyche evoked by new technologies - from the psychological point of view something enigmatic (numinous) happens to our psyche (identity) every time we log in to the network. The result of all our actions taken within the network become, often unconscious, creation of virtual identity or personality (the whole becoming more than its component parts), that despite its lack of reality becomes full of life, energy, having its own history and influence over the real one. Unlimited by the

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[j] According to Castells (2010, s. 37-8) there is an increasing contradiction between 'space of flows' - global architecture of networks (mega-nodes of wealth, power, innovation, global culture based on the multidimensional infrastructure of connectivity : interacting globally, instantly at any chosen time) is mainly connected to decision implementation, while space of places - local architecture of networks (still connected through the space of flows but rooted in local : face to face relations/contacts/ culture, required for generation of initiatives/business deals, ideas/talents and innovations) is still fundamental for key innovation and decision making process. As such there is growing contradictory relationship between meaning (cultural and social meaning is generally defined in place terms (local relations) and functionality : power and wealth (generally defined on the terms of flows)

[k] According to Barglow "The historical shift from mechanical to information technologies helps to subvert the notions of sovereignty and self-sufficiency that have provided an ideological anchoring for individual identity since Greek philosophers elaborated the concept more than two millennia ago. In short, technology is helping to dismantle the very vision of the world that in the past it fostered." (Castells 2010, s. 22-23)

traditional rules of behaviour, social relations or cultural norms and values existing within the real life - the virtual personality seems to be more assertive, less social or cultural restraint, more instinct driven and more stimulated to act, giving more opportunities and capacity for effective action, while lacking of liability or self-control at the same time. Referring to Jung's analytical psychology, we could simply say that virtual identity (personality) is usually complementary to the real one, becoming the extension (augmentation) of the real personality, thus creating the tension and often cognitive dissonance when constantly moving (transitioning) 'in between' the real and virtual (evoking the liminal experience).[1]

The relative lack of resistance or barriers, often experienced in real life (cultural, social, or economic) often presents 'false illusion' or promise of immediate satisfaction of needs and desires or dreams, fulfilled 'here and now' within described virtual space/environment (operating beyond physical limitation of space and time). As such the relations/experiences mediated within this space of 'virtual reality or real virtuality', in the context of anonymity (no direct confrontation with others/feedback information) seems to be less real (unreal) with no visible or direct impact on our real life (identity). In this situation, when the 'virtual reality or real virtuality' created by new technologies becomes the (only) response to our (unfulfilled) needs and dreams, affecting the very essence of 'who we are or who we want to be', it often evokes the less mature, anti-social impulses or aspects of ourselves, that so far have been kept in control by the accepted standards: cultural, social or political. As a result, every time we experience/ move into the virtual space/environment, often in a non-intentional and unaware manner, we accept the emergence of (new) 'virtual identity' (personality), in many cases radically different (with a small resemblance), rather complementary to the real one. To some extent we become oblivious to our behaviour in digital world- our new virtual self reveal itself often in an un-intentional and unconscious way, only in a small degree recalling our real self (identity). From the point view of Jung's analytical psychology, [m] we could say that creating virtual identity is, in majority of cases, constructed by projecting the shadow (less mature and antisocial impulses, instincts or/and aspects of ourselves, both positive and negative, repressed or never recognised by our conscious identity). Consequences of recalling/evoking this unconscious aspect of psyche to our very lives, can be not only dramatic, but also dangerous, bringing often more confusion (cognitive dissonance), ambiguity or uncertainty along with the tension and suffering in real life.

Spending more and more time in virtual space/environment, often in very compulsive way, we should be aware of these fundamental psychological changes occurring within our identity- having a virtual personality, more free and powerful (usually more assertive, effective and courageous/daring to take risk) can often reprieve us from the tensions and/or problems of the real life. One could assume that creating or adapting the virtual identity -' in

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[1] Describing the complex process of global transformation (in the context of the social, economic, cultural and political changes) on the collective and individual level, M. Stein in his book Transformation. Emergence of the Self (2005) refers to the concept of the symbolism of the radical transformation (or rather alchemical transfiguration) as a liminal experience, thus underlying that "in what for a long time it seemed pointless (irrelevant) hides a deeper meaning (sense). Everything depends on the internal changes, when it happens, then and only then the world will change "

[m] *The foundation of the Jung analytical psychology derives from in the hidden, deep realm of psyche (depth psychology) with the main focus on the analytical theory of the unconscious ("hidden mind") : complexes of the unconscious , individual and collective unconscious (archetypes) pointing to the primal and creative aspects of the unconscious realm of the psyche, which by definition can't not be known or recognised (directly). Meanwhile, the conscious part of the psyche, the main field of the interest/ focus of contemporary science, psychology and psychotherapy, Jung perceive as secondary to collective unconscious, comparing it to the "small island of the ocean of the unconscious" (as a result, our psyche constantly moves 'in between' consciousness and unconsciousness, highlighting the significant role of the unconscious processes in our psyche)*

between' (outside) the stressful meetings or (hardship) obligations in real life- makes us more relaxed and gives the opportunity to go beyond (distance ourselves) or simply forget for a moment about our current situation (real identity). However, such an adoption of virtual identity have a high price (to pay) in real life -firstly the very aspects (features) of virtual identity can be integrated by our real identity (making us more daring, impulsive, aggressive, or less respectful), secondly the virtual identity can become dominant over the real one, taking over our time and space at the expense of the real life, thus bringing a disastrous consequences (such as uncontrolled spending on digital shopping, addiction to virtual reality of computer games, social networking, pornographic sites, uncontrolled romances, or aggressive (politically incorrect) comments behaviour). Often, when the identity changes are not as dramatic or so spectacular, it's a lot harder to notice subtle changes/implications, that accompany our real lives (identities)- usually we are not so much aware, that by posting our private photos and/or personal information, we deprive ourselves of a privacy (making our lives or experiences a public property), which of course does not remain without the effect (influence) on our psyche.

As a result, real and virtual identity (though this division from the point of view of the psyche is mainly contractual: symbolic) continually affects (influences) each other, often coming in collision or conflict, thus creating 'short circuit' (recalling the metaphor of S. Ziżek) [n]and more or less visible tension (or in more dramatic cases: split (personality disorder) or psychic breakdown) [o] in real life. Our virtual identity (personality) often seems to dialogue (negotiate) or compete with the real one, constantly reminding us about our limitations or weaknesses (shortcomings, unfulfilled needs/dreams), mainly because often our imaginary about ourselves (potential or unlimited versions of ourselves) takes over the existing reality. As such we tend to choose our virtual identity (version of our Ideal Self) in comparison to which our real identity becomes barely average, boring, flat or faded - unfortunately our ideas (imaginary) do not change the real identity (as we would much prefer to: with ease and grace, usually reality resists our wishes (desires), requiring real effort, work and commitment to make the real changes). The end result of such imaginaries - projection of an ideal Self- brings depression (lack of acceptance, subjective reluctance (disappointment) of our real identity) or what's more total absorption by virtual identity (projection identification), resembling psychosis. The only effective way out of the situation is to avoid for the time being (discontinue entering) virtual space/environment, which strengthens our real identity, thus threatened (dominated) by its virtual version. Often many people deliberately use the internet to actively reconfigure some aspects of their own personality, assuming that as a result their real self becomes a better, more complete or attractive (version of Self), but the only result is the falsification of the real personality (apparent and superficial personality change). The concept of the digital divide, usually evoke to identify those having access to the network and those excluded from it -perfectly describes this crack (division) in our psyche,

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[n] Favourite metaphor of Słavoj Žižek (2011,)-in his book "Short Circuits" he wrote "the short circuit occurs when a network is properly connected-defective, of course, from the point of view of its smooth functioning. So one could wonder if upheaval accompanying short circuits is not one of the best metaphors of critical interpretation? Isn't it true that one of the most effective procedures is a combination of those wires that usually do not come into contact with each other? "

[o] One can wonder whether this type of experience can be defined in terms of the dissociative personality disorder or multiple personality disorder- but the second type of definitions appear here much unauthorized, in fact, applied usually to traumatic experiences. We all to some extent experience dissociation of some kind (defined as the breakdown of the normal integration of thoughts and/or behaviours with the knowledge and memory, with the end result of not being able to integrate certain aspects of ourselves)-common mindless web surfing without awareness of the passage of time is a good example of such a dissociation in the world of new technologies ..

when more and more of our lives is taken over by almost continuous transition 'in between' real and virtual identity.

In the book Virtually You E. Aboujaoude (2011) refers to scientific studies showing real, measurable changes within the chemistry of our brain, evoked by experiencing (interacting with) virtual world (mainly with the secretion of dopamine: by activating the 'pleasure system', thus evoking in the brain an effect similar to the addictive psychoactive substance).[p] That could undoubtedly explain often our compulsive or obsessive relation (dependence) to new technologies, what's even more the research are showing that our normal inhibition system, which under normal circumstances helps us control over thoughts and behaviours, in the virtual space/environment is subjected to almost chronic failure, defined in literature as "online disinhibition effect".[q] According to dr J.Suller, the online disihibition effect is a result of few, unique for the digital space/environment characteristics, which include: anonymity ('not me' strategy underlining lack of responsibility for our own behaviour in the net), no visible barriers or/and boundaries (blur of relations/boundaries between personal/individual and the collective with no direct confrontation/feedback from others), and no real hierarchy (lack of vertical hierarchy: quality of authority or meaning, with dominant horizontal connection, where all seems equal). According to E. Aboujaoude (2012. 39-40) with dissociated, disinhibited personality (identity), we should rather be aware of the five aspects of psyche fighting for underlying its presence (as a characteristic attribute of the virtual space/environment) : superiority complex (feeling that there are no limits to what can be achieved: within digital network), narcissism (tendency to think of ourselves as the centre of gravity of global network), shadow (dark, less mature aspects of our personality), impulsiveness (succumbing to our instincts, needs or desires) and regression (regressing to the more infantile, immature or impulsive behaviours or emotions).

3. POST- MODERN CULTURE : SIMULACRA AND SIMULATION – 'IN BETWEEN' REAL AND VIRTUAL - ON THE LEVEL OF THE COLLECTIVE

Within the contemporary dynamics of 'liquid modernity' with a constant excess of symbolic content "precession of simulacra", enhanced multiplication of signs and images has reached such an intensity, that has created a new quality: hyper-reality, which only further exacerbated this process: simulacra-sation: blurring of the boundaries between reality and its multiplied (virtual) reflection with no real verification possible. Baudrillard suggests, that the cultural reality of simulacrum is accompanied by a process of implosion, that what is social into the mass - intensive production of information (signs) deprived of its meaning, accompanied by the 'information ecstasy' caused by the excessive speed and volatility (cascade) of images, signs and symbols, leading only to further disorientation, alienation and "radical uncertainty as to what do we want, as to our choice, our own opinion, and our own will."[r] As a result, the post-modern culture has been mostly assimilated by the mass culture,

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[p] M.J. Koepp , Nature 393 (1998) w : E. Aboujaoude (2012)

[q] J. Suller, Cyberpsychology and bevaiour, nr. 2(2004) w: E. Aboujaoude (2012)

[r] According to Baudrillard "it is no longer a question of either maps or territory. Something has disappeared: the sovereign difference between them that was the abstraction's charm. For it is the difference which forms the poetry of the map and the charm of the territory, the magic of the concept and the charm of the real. This representational imaginary, which both culminates in and is engulfed by the cartographer's mad project of an ideal coextensivity between the map and the territory, disappears with simulation, whose operation is nuclear and genetic, and no longer specular and discursive. With it goes all of metaphysics. No more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept; no more imaginary coextensivity: rather, genetic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models - and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of

in which the fundamental differences between art and culture, defined by Bourdieu 'difference in symbolic or cultural value or/and capital' are blurred in the context of pervasive visuality of multi-modal and multi-sensoral 'excess culture' as well as the pragmatism of everyday 'media spectacle' (Debourd's society of spectacle). This of course equates or flatters the potentials and values within culture (liquidating the hierarchical definitions or values within culture for the benefit of horizontal ones), that demands even more redefinition and/or further denotation (designation), especially in the context of radical pluralism (polyphony), relativism (ambiguity and contextuality) and fragmentation or chaos: both axiological and epistemological.

The diversity and the complexity of cultural patterns through which we interpret the world, and we are being interpreted by, radically changes our way of perception (understanding) of the existing reality as well as the virtuality. In this situation, the definition and understanding of the process 'in between' real and virtual is crucial, not only as usual from the technological, but also from the cultural, sociological but also from philosophical and psychological perspective, mainly because both postmodern culture as well as postmodern identity is heavily immersed within this new forms of virtuality (described in terms of virtual reality or real virtuality). This brings us even to more philosophical and technical question at the same time: what is the meaning (difference between) of real(ity) and virtual(ity) -taking into account that philosophical dissertations are not really the main subject of this article (although having fundamental implications), we should rather stick rather to its etymological meaning. Looking at SJP (Polish Language Dictionary) we can find virtual defined as "created in human mind, theoretically possible (to exist)" while real defined as "actually existing", which then brings the need to further differentiate between virtual and digital - the second meaning of virtual refers to "created on the screen in so realistic way that it seems as real", while digital is usually referred to "usage of digital technologies or cyber (programming) language (binary code)", opposing the real (physical /material) and virtual (digital/immaterial) process of realisation (with virtual representation as real simulation).

According to Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard, there is no separation between 'reality' and its symbolic representation - cultures are made up of communication processes, based on the production and consumption of signs and symbols - as such all societies humans has existed in and acted through a symbolic environment. Thus reality as experienced, has always been virtual because it has always been perceived through symbols, framing practice with some meaning, that escapes their strict semantic definition. It's precisely this ability of all forms of language to encode ambiguity and/or paradox, opening up to the diversity of interpretations, that makes cultural expressions distinct from formal/ logical/mathematical reasoning. According to Castells, "it's through polysemic character of our discourses, that the complexity and even contradictory quality of messages of the human mind manifest themselves - this range of cultural variation of the meaning of messages is what enables us to interact with each other in a multiplicity of dimensions, some explicit, some implicit" (2007, s. 403). As such all realities are communicated through symbols, regardless of the medium, all (symbols) are displaced in relation to their assigned semantic meaning - taking that into consideration, in a sense, all reality is virtually perceived. As a result, when critics of digital media (technology) argue that this new symbolic environment does not represent 'reality',

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times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere"

they implicitly refer to the first definition of virtuality: notion of potential (uncoded) real experience that have not existed. But this primal (historic) continuity and/or replication of meaning/culture does not represent contemporary, disrupted as said before, meaning/culture, which refers to the emergence of (new) forms and meanings.

Coming then to the digital (representation of culture/information), we usually refer to technical point view of binary code or bytes (sequences of binary digits of either 0s or 1s). Digitization, then, refers to the process of converting different forms of information/culture, including sounds, images, texts into this code, in which it can then be stored, delivered, and received in digital form, underlying the digital character of representation of the (chosen) object and/or process, usually connected with its presence in cyberspace (digital network), appearing in 'real form' of simulacra(s). Staying with this 'technical' definition there are some immediate implications - first is that the information/culture has no particular relationship to the digital system (medium) within which it's stored or through which it's circulated- the same sound recording/text/film can be stored via in different formats within different devices (divergence of technology & convergence of information/culture). Second implication is that, in theory all information/culture become 'the same' produced and distributed on a scale and speed unprecedented until now (sent or access immediately: here and now), fundamentally changing the economic, social & cultural landscape existing so far. Taking into account the pervasiveness of digitalisation throughout the whole realm of human activity - the diversification, multimodality and versatility of the new digital system, able to embrace and integrate all forms of expression, as well as the diversity of interests, values, and imaginations, including the expression of social conflicts - becomes the entry point in analyzing the complexity of the new economy, society, and culture in the making. [s]According to Martin Hand (2008), it's precisely because of broader cultural, economical and social perspective, fully immersed within promises and threats (utopian & dystopian discourses) that "digitality can be thought of as a marker of culture because it encompasses both the artefacts and systems of signification and communication that most clearly demarcate our contemporary way of life from others" (Gere w: Hand 2008, s. 4).

As a result the issue at stake is not that the medium is the message, but rather that the message is the message - the message behind the medium (not keeping up with the technological transformation/ change) in this context, can refer to a known hypothesis of cultural lag (delay), introduced in sociology by William Ogburn. According to this hypothesis, changes occurring in the material and instrumental layer of culture, inevitably need to move to a non-material (symbolic) layer of culture: expressive (art, literature), cognitive (learning, knowledge, education) and normative (standards, values, rules of social organization), usually not without some time delay. Logos sphere (realm of ideas, meanings, values) should keep up with techno sphere, but not without the feedback - as such removing 'the cultural delay' can be introduced either by the cultural phenomena of 'catching up with' new technologies, or by 'slowing down' the pace of technological change.

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[s] This does not simply imply the technological determinism, meaning that new social forms and culture, or processes emerge as a consequence of technological change, nor does not imply that the society script the course of technological change, since many factors intervene within the process of scientific discovery, technological innovation, and social or cultural applications (as such the final outcome depends usually on a complex pattern of interactions). The key here is the approach to the relation between culture and technology : either as opposing dialectics or inseparable part of (when defining culture as a contingent arrangement of artefacts, knowledge, discourses, and practices within a given site, with "techne representing a complex history of reflexive self-definition" according to Sandywell (1996, s. 33). In post-Foucauldian interpretation, there are only 'cultural technologies' as technologies are inseparable from institutional and organizational cultures, so when we isolate one aspect of technology such as digital code, we then ignore whole other aspects or elements, constituting 'the new culture emerging' (humans part: relation to it or practices of the self orientated around it).

So on the one hand, we experience 'catching up with' new technologies phenomena, more and more visible in our 'everyday culture' with the main indicator : changes in the realm of conversational language and appearance of the new concepts i.e. chatting, sms texting, blogging, twitting, surfing or facebooking. As such can see the phenomena of immersing in everyday life as a form of escape from restlessness of continuous change, giving us more comfort of routine - everyday life is important this level reveals, incorporates, comprise almost everything, which form the society: power, exclusion, influences, interests, culture, social relations. This is sphere of reflection on the identity, the search for meanings, emotions, sensations, intimacy of life, happiness, negotiating with technology and its personalization. Technology fatigue (weariness) raises the stress, in response to almost exponential growth of information, incentives, experience, making more and more people, especially young ones to search for new ways of increasing (enhancing) processing capacity of the mind to adapt freely to this exponential technological change (resulting dispersed attention and multitasking abilities). Within 24/7 mode of informational society it' even more difficult to switch from active to resting mode - cultural anthropology uses the term of liminal mode of existence, referring to the situation of living 'in between' two different modes: within the normative governance/institutional structure/culture and breaking out (suspending/sublimating) of the normative structure/culture.

On the other, we could also observe a tendency to slow down changes in social culture, coming with technology fatigue, expressed by failure to keep up with the pace of technological changes or/and adaptation difficulties. Taking into account that technological development has long outpaced the biological evolution, desire to slowdown is getting stronger and stronger, becoming the natural phenomena (defence mechanism). Metaphorically speaking, we swallow huge dose of technology, but have not digested it properly, studies confirm that even so called 'digital natives' have more & more increasingly adaptive problems, they tend to be overwhelmed by the new technologies and, although don't hesitate to use them, are not free from stress and trauma resulting from blistering acceleration or the constant pursuit for news, making them feel almost the beginners. On this ground, we can see contestation movement, so called "digital counter-revolution", with the characteristics of the revolt or rebellion based on the model of the old cultural counter-revolution. This rebellion manifests itself in alternative fashions of lifestyles - moving away from (contesting) main stream media, unlimited use of mobile phones, credit cards or other new technologies leaving digital traces, with the main objective to strike a balance between the logo-sphere and bio-techno-sphere. As such it express itself with new social movement such as *low tech, slow food, slow life* - favouring the post-material values, focused more on the quality of life rather than accumulation of material goods. In other words, fear of the accelerating future tells us to seriously re-consider whether or not we should slow down & build quietly slow society and different type of socialization, today threatened by 'market capitalization'. Otto Marquard (Gadacz 2009) speaks of two speeds and two social rhythms of the history: one perfunctory, in which it seems to us that history rushes, accelerates and aiming at the huge development of civilization: technological, economical & social, the second subcutaneous, which seems almost immutable, appearing with the same existential or philosophical questions "immutable are questions posed by people, which from the perspective of this acceleration may seem anarchronic".

To conclude, this increased diversity and complexity of cultural patterns through which we interpret the world, and we are being interpreted by, defined in terms of plurality,

ambiguity, uncertainty and (constant) change in so called space 'in between' different rationalities, modalities of being/perception, communication or experience, requires better understanding of 'post-modern identity' and new types of intervention, or psychological context - possible only through/via psycho-cultural approach (in-depth analysis between psyche and culture). As such post-modern times requires new ways of perceiving and understanding cultural values and symbols, used by human to look for personal meanings (cultural myth as the medium of value for shaping the narrative identity). What's more, study of the simultaneous feedback process is needed - the nature and function/ role of individual imaginaries and narrative truths to create over-cultural quality, and last but not least : the analysis of the space of exchange, dialogue and mutual influence of both of these fields in space ' in between '. Lack of proper psycho-cultural perspective causes us to ignore or marginalise the meaning of many contemporary symptoms and phenomena, often by making reductive or pathological interpretation - more and more often we are not able to understand and conduct proper psychotherapy of many psycho-cultural problems, cause the source core of the psychotherapy in this situation lies outside of the field of traditional psychology: usually in culture, arts, or sacrum (numinosum). As a result, there is a growing need for mediation in order to move 'in between' complex narratives and experiences in so called space 'in between' different rationalities, modalities of being/perception, communication or actions, especially in the context of the contemporary 'liminal experience'.

Both the experience and the narratives are testing the paradox, multilogical and poli-semitic constellation/order, when human meets with a multiplicity of forms, and the ambiguity of cultural contexts, often providing conflicting meanings (thus constellating growing need for mediation in order to move 'in between' complex narratives and experiences). The internal architecture of modernity: the space 'in between' is a whole different dynamic than dual binary opposition and the tension in between as a result (moving from one polarity to another by disintegration process/crisis), while the space 'in between' quite well captures the style and character of modernity - the psycho-cultural interface or dialogue: mediation and communication between psyche and culture (intra and extra processes of psyche and psycho-cultural translation).

The result is the urgent need to integrate the meaning, specifying the context is not enough, cause the dynamics of the post-modern world, constant 'precession of simulacra' blurs the boundaries between reality and its multiplied reflection, the original and a copy, the map and the territory (blurring not only the boundaries between the symbolic, semiotic and real but also between cultural production and consumption) with the emphasis on speed, circulation and movement rather than reflexive distance, meaning or value. This leaves us with the need to 'feel or sense' rather than 'think' moving contexts and various codes, language games or symbols in order to make the translation or mediation in space 'in between'.

Constructing the identity by embracing the cultural meanings and constructing the world (cultural and symbolic reality) in the process of (digitalised) communication, implies intensive psycho-cultural discourse, dialogue between individual and over-individual narratives (personal myth -cultural myth), rituals of transition (rite the passage) of subjective realities or micro-worlds, and constant re-creating (actualisation) of the personal myth (dropping our own identity and re-creating it again over and over) in the language of S. Keena.

BIOGRAPHY

Joanna Kasza – PhD (work in progress) in Institute of Culture, Jagiellonian University. *Main field of interest and professional experience:* interdisciplinary relations (research/projects) 'in between' economy, art and culture, and technology or in a broader perspective in between: political economy (economics, political science) and humanities (semiotics,cultural studies) in relation to technology (ICT or digital revolution) and identity (in particular the determinants of identity influenced by modern paradigms: scientific, cultural, economical and technological) within the context of contemporary questions about the relations between culture and ideology, hegemony and power and politics/political. Author of many articles and publications in the field of economics, culture management and creativity i.e. *Pure Joy or coercion of creativity. Analysis of creativity from the perspective of cultural political economy* (2016) and impact of new ICT technologies on contemporary culture and identity : *"Simulacra and simulation: the impact of ICT upon 'radical transformation' of culture"*

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