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The socialization of young people in imaginary worlds

Abstract

Internet is emerging as a value-neutral medium, but receives, with applications offered over it, dimensions (imaginary or virtual) power of unimaginable proportions. The young generations, born in the era of continuous improvement of the media and the technological innovations that accompany it, are the “natives” of this age, and the older generations are “strangers- newcomers” reciprocal to the years of age. Sociology, and other social sciences and humanities, are facing the challenge of adopting new theoretical titles and its content, as compared to traditional names and contents. It refers to changing the traditional paradigm of socialization of young generations, which strongly generates the conflict of traditional (return to the tradition of the Middle Ages and even earlier) and modern (the rejection of tradition and its eye for reform, then giving new content to the traditional notions). This also applies to parenting, education and upbringing, as well as the role of society in general as traditional spatial, temporal, religious, ethnic, labor, gender and all other forms of its manifestation. Therefore, not only the present and the future are treated as virtual (imaginary), but the past is increasingly seen as virtual.

Keywords: *Internet, socialization, generational conflict, modernity, tradition, virtual, young people.*

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Introduction

Internet is emerging as a new paradigm of time and universal access to “anything and everything”, and, on the other hand, it causes concern that the classic sociability and intimacy, quality of a man as a social being, comes more and more down to individuality and social isolation. Disadvantages of direct contacts and living the experience, as the millennial model of socialization of young generations, according to many theorists are irrecoverable losses. Since are not recognized the real social aspects it is most often accused the rapid technological development and the associated technical equipment (phones, tablets, game consoles, simulators, platforms, etc.). For all these reasons, and given that in this area we are on the ground which is not sufficiently explored, although never in the history of mankind no topic got so many versions and academic observation than the internet and modern techniques and technologies, it is necessary at the outset to define what is in this analysis meant by the internet in this context.

This is a technology for the transmission of the interpersonal communication that occurs in the womb of society in a specific historical moment as a product of a radical modernization or the global social transformation that has accelerated in the last quarter of the twentieth century.² One of the pioneers of explication, but also the formation of virtual reality, and computer graphics in general, Ivan Sutherland treats this technique, resulting on the basis of science and technology of the twentieth century, as a glance at the window through which we see the virtual world. For those who are “producers” and participants this is a challenge that the world seems real, that it behaves like real, it sounds like real and is perceived as real. Here we will not deal with extensive elaboration of simulating the reality, and even its producing, because it is a wide field in which are achieved more and more results.³ Also, it would lead us far and that many parameters that seem to be undisputed and

² Such formulation imply, with certain modifications, A. Feenberg and M. Bacardi in text: „Virtual community- no „killer“ implication“, in *Now Media&Society*, Vol 6(1), pp. 37-43. The text can be read at https://www.sfu.ca/~andrewf/books/Virtual_Community_No_Killer_Implication.pdf (access 10.10.2016.)

³ Simulating, and even a sort of producing a new reality, which in the example of the movie “Avatar” is not only fiction but also significant scientific contribution (the same goes for “Jurassic park” of Spielberg) where are realized the new achievements and realistic considerations of the past and the long-extinct creatures. All this and more of the recent approaches in technology and its application in an article: Srdanović Mile, Virtual reality or real virtuality? available at: http://www.srdanovic.com/PDFFiles/VirtuelanOblik-VirtuelnaStvarnost_071.pdf (access 10.10.2016.)

actual (but up to now we have devised and unchangeable) in the “real world” that we perceive and explore on the level agreed, of conventional (metric measures, time and other parameters), which would result in social sciences and humanities to be proven to belong to the world not so rational but rather as imaginary (nation, class, country, and even the society as a very flexible concept, and about love and other states not to speak).⁴ This must be emphasized because only defining the virtual reality often refers to the projection of the future, the formation of desirable (unrealistic) models of behavior, impact on consumers, etc. Manuel Castells points out that the advent of the Internet that “for the first time in history, in the same system unites all written, oral and audiovisual forms of human communication”⁵ Thus, it is clear that every individual on the planet Earth, and society from the very beginning of sociality, as well as socialization of what we imagine in the classical form (family, environment, school, various social groups, economic and educational opportunities, etc.) is part of the actual and “more real” reality.

Virtual and “real” reality

By paraphrasing Morton Heiling we want to point out what is essentially a virtual reality. The aforementioned author states that when something new occurs every man, like a child who discovers the world, thinks he is re-invented, but when he scratches a little beneath the surface, he will see a cave man who paints over the walls, creating, in some sense, the virtual world. What is really new in our age are sophisticated instruments that allow the creation of this world easier. Simply put, virtual reality are dreams.⁶ In an attempt to un-

⁴ This also applies to the interpretation of the past that is not seldom imagined according to the dominant concepts, partial evidence and explaining these evidence, but often the interpretation in the modern way no matter what is the paradigm of life in everyday life and behavior, but in the forms of belief and ideology as well as the understanding of man was different than it is in the modern age interpreted. For example about the nation as “imagined community” see in Benedict Anderson (1990), *The nation imagined community*, School books Zagreb. or the interpretation of artifacts from the past of Johnson Matthew (2008), *archaeological theory*, Clio Belgrade about the invention of tradition Hobsbom, Erik and Ranger, Terence(ur.) (2011), *Inventing traditions XXI century* Belgrade and many other numerous works. Unfortunately, as with other imagining reality, the realization in the real world often results in explosive and destructive power, and the “life” of imaginary social phenomena constantly receives new dimensions (Karl Renan emphasizes that nation is a “daily referendum”)

⁵ Castells, Manuel, *The rise of the network society*, Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2000.

⁶ According to: Biocca, Frank; Levy, Mark, *Communication in the Age of Virtual Reality*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995. str. 3. Retrieved from: www.questia.com

derstand the concept of virtual reality, people often mention the different levels of technology while discussing its prospects, while it, in fact, less and less refers to the technology and more on the emerging communication system.⁷

It is a known fact in the majority of parents in the primary socialization (family) from the start to point out maximalist demands arising from their own imagining the future of the child, where everything and provided that it is with the best intentions (and at the majority of parents it is, no doubt) whether then we can talk about a kind of virtual reality and reality, as and beautifying their own past and cleaning the future. With fairy tales are met most of the babies who grow up around the world, with fictional characters like Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, a modern mythology brought with some old long-imagined characters, and the Barbies, Mimi, Maša, but also the Superman, Batman, with numerous contents of digital images that come to life with Dracula, young and old werewolves, super heroes, etc.. Fictional worlds⁸ still represent “a voice from the margins, because the worlds that do not belong to what modern era recognizes as real in itself remain largely discredited - in the wake of a certificate that is valid from the Enlightenment to the present day (ie throughout the modern era) - that all the stories about magic (a concoction is also magic) are associated with cognitive perspective of the groups that Western elites traditionally defined as inferior, “primitive”, women, children and the lower classes.”⁹ Thus the adult world still has its foundation in the “rationality” (which must be proven), and fictional worlds are often referred to as a threat for growing whose content and future projections“ are implied and not questionable.” Of course, with this we do not want to go into the justification or highlighting the positive examples to develop a sense of good, generosity, solidarity, loyalty, etc.. But it is clear that in the process of socialization of young generations with the real everyday world (which can hardly be explained as real, because it depends on individual perceptions and interpretations, as well as local, regional and global stereotypes, cultural

⁷ The Same. p. 15.

⁸ They are, in fact, very similar to the areas on which Tolkien talks in the early 1947, defining fairy stories, for which he claims are not stories about fairies, but the stories of the space in which they can exist. (According to Gavrlović, 2016: 28). John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (the writer of the “Lord of the Rings”) this said before by opening the debate about the dimensions of space that will be realized when his trilogy about hobbits, fairies, wizards, is filmed and thus received “its” visual expression, a place where were filmed scenes of this extremely popular epic “on the border of worlds” have become popular and are a tourist attraction. Similar is with the other fictional places from movies and novels. Liljana Gavrilović in the quoted book as a reference literature mentions: Saler, Michael, *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

⁹ Gavrilović, Liljana, *More real than the real*, Belgrade, 2016. p 28.

models, value judgments, etc.) there is a virtual world that with the “real” lives in the same area. If we can draw any conclusion from the time before the “Networked Age” and online new-millennial generation, then at least we can say that the primary socialization in the family, school and mostly in other locations of secondary socialization was preparing young people for some stable values of unchangeable character, where it was manifested as official policy and ideology of the world that has standardized knowledge, but also pedagogical and psychological methods.

This stability, probably, has never been just absolutely stable (if we perhaps do not except the Middle Ages and the rule of (again hypothetical) religious canon), because if it was there would not be any persecution of dissidents, even those who have interpreted the world differently. They are often presented in the form of imaginary “devils”, “witch”, “spirits” and so on. That is, in the later period there would not be generational conflicts that with the new age of enlightenment and a new system of school learning and standard transfer of knowledge through the “national” language, “national” symbols, personalities, standardization of “golden age”, ethno-centric favoring of their own nation, its retouched and its glorious past, its messianic role, etc.

This concept of education is tied to the primary socialization of young people that took place in the family which by securing full employment of all its members increasingly shortened the stay of children in the home and leaving socialization to the specialized state agencies (kindergarten, preschool room, full day stay, etc.). Controversy of “eternal” characteristics of the family becomes clear with the increasing number of divorces and children that even before new trends in family and marriage had more parents or those who have a desire to socialize them.

Modern socialization

Socialization of modern age in its primary and secondary embodiment, gives to young people the majority of values that are perceived as desirable, wherein in the (formal) frame are inserted and an imaginary worlds which in very flexible form yields the performances of the dimensions of the reality. As if the older are “more realistic” if they were ready in the long historical stages for the planned goals to give their lives and sacrifice material possessions and even family members (the role of mother and father the deceased hero) with which they were themselves victims of virtual worlds conceived in the minds of rulers, prophets, religious leaders, mass murderers and so on.

This social context of modern and postmodern must be understood in order to speak about the modern trends of the Internet and the Web. Young people and before the technical gadgets such as conventional computers, laptops, or tablets, androids, smartphones and other new versions of communications technology, have been left to the technique. In this way were made all the preparations in evolutionary - cultural terms, which began with the era of television, and it was the first medium (it is not in vain said, the "Window to the World") through which the output of various sizes, were incorporated realities into the real worlds of former social relations (direct connection of people who have news transmitted orally and had the need to communicate) to the more immediate (practically) the carriers who responded live from the scene. These places and the countries hardly would know even the greatest intellectual only ten years earlier, and about those of the old pre-modern period, it goes without saying.

This is supported by the knowledge of daily consumption of television programs, in particular the younger generation, the producers realized and used it to influence the development of awareness of viewers and were trying to encourage a sense of connection and intimacy with viewers, by trading the elements of hyper-reality. Television plots outshined the elements of real political and social issues by creating a new relevance and reality. Similarly, in some television shows were mixed elements of reality and fiction, thus blurring the line between real and fake. However, the growth of online interaction, the ability of television to create "fictitious reality" dramatically changes. Using the possibilities of the Internet for promoting forms of intimate connections between viewers and television programs that they consume, producers can increase their ability to create a hyperreal world.¹⁰ This shift of the man (the child) from the periphery of events in the epicenter was the preparations that led to the "post-millennial so called the Generation Z"¹¹ in "duplicated reality" that theoretically is called and Negroponte's postinformational age¹² of Baudrillard's hyperrealism.¹³ Today we talk about the second media age, which is labeled by computer and internet technology.

¹⁰ According to: Latouche, Jason, "My Real Imaginary Friends: iCarly and the Power of Hyper-reality", *Americana : The Journal of American Popular Culture, 1900 to Present*, Vol. 10, No. 1. Hollywood, 2011. Retrieved from: www.questia.com

¹¹ There are various definitions and naming of this new generation: Z, Digital natives, iGen, generation M. A.G. generation (after Google)...

¹² Nicholas Negroponte In 1984, on the TED held a two-hour lecture in which he presented four innovations on which they were working then, and 3 are achieved. Some of them are OLPC (OneLaptopPerChild), electronic books, touchscreen and only one to achieve - teleconferencing (Lip Service) .His project, which is ongoing, is that every child in the world gets laptop. https://www.ted.com/speakers/nicholas_negroponte (visited: 11.10.2016.)

¹³ Tapavički Duronjić, Tatjana, „Post-millennial generation in multiplied reality“, *Culture of policies*: Year. VIII, No.16. 2011.

(Justified or not) concern of the experts around the world who are engaged in pedagogical, psychological, sociological, communicational, educational and other aspects about whether these are the elements of alienation and how to socialize young people stems from the fact that even in the changed circumstances of social development still remain the same parameters of socialization. In our opinion, the reason is that worldwide about plans for the future and the future discuss the older generations after the old-tribal principle that wisdom (knowledge, analysis, synthesis in thinking) can be stationed only in the minds of the elderly. Here is a part of a patriarchal form somewhat modified, and certainly we can agree with the opinion that the new technologies and other media era are cultural technological milieu in which are born new generations, and that the acquiring of new knowledge for elderly people is associated with significantly more difficulties. Young people with knowledge of the essence of the term, which are mostly in English - technical language of a new era, are mastering new technologies more quickly and immediately switch over to more complex operations, multi-purpose use of the multiple programs at the same time and so on. That is why the young generation are Internet natives, indigenous people and the older generations are foreigners, who often do not understand how the natives function because they are not in line with their way of thinking, but also the way of life. In these worlds, the older generations behave according to the colonial principle of proclaiming their knowledge of "reality" as the only right.

In the opinion of Wim Veena and Ben Vrakking¹⁴ differences between older and younger generations in this new age is that "the older act linear, they first read the instructions for use and then use a particular product, while the younger generation work on the fly, nonlinear, and learn by using the product. They quickly find a solution to the problems raised in many forums, by phoning friends, by using a system of trial and errors they find the best outcome. Because of all this, the new generations carry the name of the instant generation because they in a quick and expeditious way solve problems.

The theory that speaks of generational cohorts suggests that members of Generation Z will experience childhood that is over-protected, too simple and similar. This is a consequence of the so-called lifestyle of the "Early millenniums" who are now parents, teachers, educators of the Z generation, and according to their experience, on their children, they tend to "correct mistakes" of their childhood, which, among other things, is related to the feeling of exclusion, as well as the completely filled schedule every day. The outcome of this behavior is over-balancing, much more pronounced than counter-bal-

¹⁴ Veena, Wim and Vrakking, Ben, *Homo Zappiens: Growing up in a digital age*, London: Network Continuum Education, 2006.

ancing resulting in the creation of a generation that is more inclined to conformism and aversion to risk in relation to the previous.¹⁵

Unlike the older generations, young people to technology are related in the pragmatic and close way, for every new product on the market, they are finding purpose. For them, the key criteria for acceptance of technology is not aesthetic or emotional nature, rather than opportunism, that is the derive of the maximum benefit for their own needs and desires. Also, it stands out the phenomenon that occurs for the first time in history, the reverse education, or a process in which the younger generations teach their parents how to use digital technology ... Older generations are focused on semantic symbols while the younger generations in every symbol on the Internet, each icon or link, find the character and convert these symbols into information. While the older generation complain of the information overload, Homo Zappiens generation could not imagine their life without the abundance of information that surround them.¹⁶ Faced with digital technologies since their birth, members of Generation Z put social media at the center of their social world, and almost completely ignore the contact "face to face". This phenomenon can cause problems in social interaction and in conflict resolution in school, college, work, etc. Assistance by the elderly can be very useful for this generation, in terms of overcoming social difficulties in the real space, while on the other hand can get to trade, given the natural connection of the Z generation with new technologies, ie. they can become mentors for older generations.¹⁷

Online applications are an integral part of the common nature of the Z generation, as well as online gaming, which is very important for this generation because it forms a group of individuals who will have the leader function of keeping the edge in online business interactions.

Generation of digital era

About the aforementioned talks the need that in every place of work or the free movement of the young generation of the digital era, most of them capture first their magical technical devices for the transfer of information

¹⁵ According to: Rickes, Persis C, „How Gen Z Will Continue to Transform Higher Education Space“, *Planning for Higher Education*, Vol. 44, No. 4. 2016. Retrieved from: www.questia.com

¹⁶ Bubonjić, Mladen, „Growing up in the digital age“, *Communication Management Quarterly: Journal for communications management* no. 27, 2013. p 181.

¹⁷ Marron, Maria B, „New Generations Require Changes beyond the Digital“, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* Vol. 70, No. 2, 2015. Retrieved from: www.questia.com

and communication and absorb the new fashion trend or the new music, a new movie and a video game, but also the bizarre content, after all, the world of information is a river of whose water is thirsty every young man and who is a potential participant in the act to click and open a new page, a video, or a photo which is precisely registered. Of course, this is the stereotype that a new technique belongs only to the young generations, because it is obvious that new technologies affect more or less all generations and all people.

Many of the performances and the “big” stories “in modern times in the first half of the XXI century become questionable or, if nothing else, change their form in which the numerous patterns which they described are lost. This also applies to the family, but also to the environment, the school system, ideology, state systems, the globalization of the world... That is how are changed the forms of socialization of young people and some earlier forms, which are still predominantly taught in all major school systems, they are all becoming less efficient (and less necessary, they are not useful, and thus are not interesting). Therefore, such a conceptualization is a form of re-problem-ization of the basic postulates of the old theory, but also breaking through of the new that have evolved with new technologies and their attempts to establish new theoretical and philosophical toponyms. Or, to be more precise: a new wave of information and technological revolution is trying to continue to be described with the old theoretical concepts and there can be found a great reason for the “crisis” of Social Sciences.

Although the use of information technology is growing rapidly, some segments of society are still largely excluded from this trend. The term “digital divide” is used to describe the unequal access to information technologies based on income, race, ethnicity, gender, age and geographical location that emerged in the mid nineties of the last century. Data show that owning of computers and Internet access is denied to certain groups of the population and it caused a flood of public and private initiatives and the chorus of critics who dismiss this kind of division. To solve this problem it is necessary to refine the assessment of the problem and gather more information on the needs, attitudes and experience of individuals with lower incomes in minority communities in which originally appeared the digital divide.¹⁸

If we could without reservation accept the variant that the Internet has become part of the primary - secondary socialization of young people, then we can not deny the danger in those virtual spaces that are commonly re-

¹⁸ According to: Mossberger, Karen L.; Tolbert, Caroline J.; Stansbury, Mary, *Virtual Inequality: Beyond the Digital Divide*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003. p: 1. Retrieved from: www.questia.com

flected through: pornographic content on the internet, new forms of violence such as cyber violence (Cyberbullyng), receiving and sending harassing mail, and receiving - sending or sharing of inappropriate messages, contact with strangers (unknown in "real" life), meeting with strangers, and the misuse of personal data and others.

No matter if it is talked about the "unrealistic life" and its impact on the development of not only young people (existing research in the world show that in not a few cases, especially when it comes to pornography and attempts of dating with the minors and their seduction appear older that this new medium is used since it is unrealistic so that they may be unrealistic). With a few exceptions, the powerful and enormous profits on the Internet are going to the large corporations that regulate the media space and rent it because the internet and TV, is only a media window (now it is only a plural - windows) and value - neutral medium; it is only a transmitter of the content¹⁹ and in any case is not a "world without borders".

Conclusion

With modernization, the specific relationship between humans and machines is expanding its horizons and has a resume in the world of medicine, new technologies, space research, genome mapping, development of DNA research and artificial intelligence, and many other areas where, as in the whole of contemporary production, the computer appears as an indispensable. But this relationship, and what man previously found and applied, is changing the paradigm of human life on the planet. And, of course, has an impact on all spheres of life including the tradition which changed, no matter what hard traditionalists swear to its authenticity. This new conceptualization offered by digital technology requires a review and re-questioning of the basic theories and the attempt to establish the new theoretical and philosophical definition of concepts with which we deal, and whose names are no longer adequate in time in which we live. The enslavement of the theoretical concepts from the past and attempt of their implementation with that and critics of virtual reality and themselves form a new virtual reality based on old paradigms. New insights have opened possibilities and interpretations of classic texts, including texts of a religious character, even those dogmatic. Therefore, this new terrain in the alleged conflict between traditionalists and modernists or postmod-

¹⁹ Štambuk, Vladimir, *Internet and politics*, Belgrade:Verzal press, 1999. p.32

ernists, whatever you call it, more could be the conflict over who should, and for what purposes, could use the power and potential of new technologies.

Unfortunately, this grace of knowledge transfer offered by the internet, is not accompanied by the development of understanding, but in the world of the beginning of XXI century are opened new threats to global wars and the clash of concepts of virtual worlds large and powerful forces and those who just want to be. And young generation is doomed either to revolt and use of the Internet as a medium for the formation of a better future that will be lived by young generations and not those who decide of that future today. Without this active changes in young new generation threatens to be like all the previous young generations in the history of mankind - an army that does not know the target and it does not want war, and that is emerged as a virtual, moral - of the world, national, state or other duty.

Therefore, there is a genuine fear that the great benefits offered by new technologies and new vistas to be blurred with old illusions, lies, stereotypes and, as before, for possession of a telescope to go on interrogation, or possession of radio, TV (North Korea today) or possession of a computer tomorrow, we get instead of light, once again into a dark age, after which with the arsenal of the most lethal weapons, we as human communities will have no chance to say once more "Never again," as was said after Dachau gulags or after major wars in which was always hurt the progress of the human race. Today we have computers and we have information, but we follow live killing of Syria, destruction sites in Iraq and Syria, which, like Palestine, is the cradle of the human race and its beginning, and we watch and follow as it is happening on another planet.

In these changes, it is necessary to change the school system, because the current is backward and is not applied to the new conditions of development of science and technology and the new value content and the new spirit of the times. This new direction of change will include these imagined worlds as a way of transferring and traditional knowledge and values and winning the new ones which are open to all mankind. Even this kind of grace should not be missed, this opportunity must be given to all families and singles, as well as schools, religious communities, local and regional communities, states and associations of states and humanity as a whole.

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