

## ARTICLE

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# Phantasmagoria

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### Abstract

This paper provides a philosophical reflection of the crisis of democracy. Its central research focus is on what is referred to as “the world of artificial images and the lost truth” (or phantasmagoria), where the West European society experiences a sequence of distorted perceptions of reality (simulacra) broken down between various social movements, and the effect of those on the conflict-settling function of democracy, which less and less observable in contemporary societies of Western Europe. Starting from this very brief description, the article elaborates the issue of lost truth and meaning as well as the resurrection of myth based on a multitude of sub-realities or simulacra, which deprive democracy of its conflict settling mechanism and prevent social groups/movements in an atomized society from discursive consensus building.

### Keywords

Democracy, crisis of democracy, phantasmagoria, sub-realities, simulacra, truth, myth

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“What is truth?

For the multitude, that which it continually reads and hears.” (Spengler (1934))

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## 1. Introduction

In one of his poems, Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote about the October Revolution in Russia describing that on the next morning the streetcars were already driving under the socialism, however, the advent of the new epoch remained unnoticed by the majority of the citizens. In contemporary West, the situation however, is slightly different. The Grand Narratives or bigger Truths as well as Sociology as a whole can be effective when the society functions as a “Unified Totality” (Parsons 1954: 216–218), however the society in its contemporary state presents “a mass of individual atoms of Brownian motion” (Lyotard 1983: 15). In this context, the Deconstruction thrives and underlines the impossibility of homogeneous interpretation of reality. The texts and images representing reality thus can be interpreted differently by the adherers of various social groups what in turn creates multiple meanings or a complete loss of them. The incredible plurality of social groups with various sub-ideologies and ever fluctuating values brings incredible complication to the interpretation of texts and reality as such. In the age of internet and social networks the short, brisk quotes and images torn away from their contexts, serve as pillars employed to assess and evaluate our surroundings. With the rapid development of Internet and ever-increasing influences from social networks the person is given the opportunity to deepen their devotion to a particular social group/movement and social networks provide them with such opportunities.

## 2. Discussion

“Veritas Odium Parit” – “Truth Breeds Hatred”, could have been uttered yet again in the history of Western Europe, had the truth been not as evasive and fragmented as in contemporary state of late Postmodernity. Could have been uttered but this would be folly for the truth is many as well as the realities that breed them. The latter, exist and are created through the multitude of images behind which the followers of numerous social movements and groups dwell in their sub-realities, perceiving these as “Their Truth”. “Your Truth” said with endorsement Kamala Harris, the current Vice President of the United States, with full approval, when addressing the students who had been accusing Israel of “ethnic genocide” (Joffre 2021). A problem, seriousness of which perplexes the best minds still dwelling in this world, but still such a severe accusation, is labeled as “Your Truth” and as simply as that. Such endorsing simplicity concerning the judgement of one of the most complex issues in the world can be interpreted as yet another image behind which a certain sub-reality dwells, or Hyperreality as had brilliantly been pointed by Baudrillard (1995: 22–23). In his work, Debord hints that the “Hyperreality” is not an addition to the real world, but “on the contrary, it is the very heart of society’s real unreality” (Debord 1994: 5). Baudrillard, in his turn, implies that a Reality that is

Hyperreal is the simulation and the removal of the differences between the real and unreal in which the real and the fiction blend together in Simulacrum. In other words, Hyperreality is created by Simulacra which are signs and symbols and images of reality (Baudrillard 1995: 22–23). According to Baudrillard, the Hyperreality happens when there is oversaturation of the information in which the meaning is harder to find.

The ideas coining the term “Simulacrum” had been thought over since thousands of years, dating back to Plato when the “copies of original and copies of copy” had been discussed. Baudrillard distinguishes three Simulacra orders (however four in total) that cover the epochs from Renaissance to the Post-Industrial era. These Simulacra evolve from the reflections of basic reality to the perversion of reality and then to the absence of the latter with signs being “faithful copies” with the lack of original. Baudrillard gives the following definition to the term “Simulacrum” – “The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none.” (Baudrillard 1995: 1) In the contemporary late Postmodernity, the societies of Western Europe find themselves rather closer to the Simulacra order that passes the third, namely the “faithful copies” order and representing simply “copies” as well as distorted images without much sense of the orientation in the lost meanings. In such a sense the functionality of the “Democracy as a Conflict Settling Mechanism” is deeply upset as Democracy relies on meaningful exchange and on a certain number of Truths to be able to operate in a way, ideally close to an ideal form of Democracy.

The discussions on Truth and what is real and unreal, take place already for thousands of years, however, Postmodernity with its tendency to constantly introduce new to the existing contours of affairs, that is called not to be an addition to the existing rules, but rather to reshape and change them, does precisely the latter with the application and the nature of Truth (Lyotard 1983: 43). One of the greatest instruments of such an approach is the social or video/photo network (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and multiple others), a channeling of various interests and a further breakdown into interest groups/movements takes place. These networks are based on cells of “friends” and circles of “ties, groups”. The service context is created directly by the network participants. From a psychological point of view, social networks are presented as personal contacts between people who share the same sets of beliefs, amalgamating these into groupings of shared interests. For instance, Facebook has more than 400 million people in various Facebook groups that people deem “meaningful” (CNBC 2020). The meaningfulness of the group, according to Facebook, is established by means of surveys, monitoring how much time people spend in these groups and interestingly, how many of their friends are also the members of these groups (CNBC 2020). This, coupled with the rampant technological progress and the new platforms for information flows (social, video, photo networks) and the atomization of society, bring

much alternation into the perception of Truth as a concept with potentially universal application. As the introduction of printing, radio, television once changed the patterns within the societies, the internet and coupled with its technological progress nowadays lead the rampant alternations within the societies.

However, there is a great difference between these milestones. An industrial society being a relatively centralized entity, generated printing houses, radio stations, Television channels all of which had been essential in the acceleration and spreading information, education and many other possibilities. For instance, the local musicians, actors, singers, performers etc., had lost their audiences in their little towns or villages with the advent of the Radio and Television. However, this as well, gave them the chance to win the bigger audiences, though a very minute chance and, at times, very biased. The internet in contemporary time, changes this system completely, increasing this tiny possibility manifold, thus reverting the certain heavy presence of organized and centralized entities such as Television channels or Radio stations that are the facilities, each of which possesses a certain ideological pillar from which its competence assessment (or truth) derives and which forms its views on various matters. This organized culture generating machine had been brilliantly elaborated by Adorno in his essay on Culture Industry (Adorno 1991).

The Internet, to be more precise, its social/photo/video networks especially, however, do not assess truths based on the group of experts belonging to centralized culture and knowledge in the organization (which is rather a pattern of industrial and partly postindustrial societies with organized centers of information) but rather by the crowd and by social group to which particular content belongs. As mentioned by Lyotard in the "Postmodern Condition", the technological progress will have an impact on the status of knowledge (Lyotard 1983: 38) what is very observable in the contemporary time. The contemporary information-based society, leads itself to believe that it is a knowledge-based society and that members of which can make an informed decision concerning various topics.

However, as had been mentioned by Nietzsche (1997) in the "Twilight of Idols", "a proof by pleasure" is a significant factor affecting the many beliefs of human kind. This, is an allusion to the Biblical "proof of strength" (I Cor. 2:4), however, here a pleasant thought is considered to be correct. Nonetheless, superficial judgements represent a core of contemporaneity, yet once again proving that the society is rather information based where information is sporadic, very frequently torn from contexts which often cripples meaning creation. In the age of internet and social networks the longer teleological texts are out fashioned by short, brisk quotes and texts resembling the sayings and proverbs, at times, torn away from their contexts. For instance, the social Network "Twitter" has a maximum text length of 280 characters. For instance, longer texts in the vast of social networks are lacking popularity for the swift changing newsfeed and endless chaotic

flows of information present a precisely Post or perhaps Post-Postmodern simulation in which prevail the “absence of hierarchy, disorderly notion of order, lack of topic-oriented order but rather the collection of fragments of ideas, pictures, news, thoughts, creations with various meanings”. With the rapid development of Internet and ever-increasing influences from social networks (and further decentralized platforms that give emphasis on individuals at come into conflict with the centralized authorities...for example Airbnb, Uber and many others.) the person is given the opportunity to deepen their devotion to a particular social group/movement and social networks provide them with such opportunities (not deepening the connection to the society as a whole). For instance, Facebook has more than 400 million people in various Facebook groups that people deem “meaningful” (CNBC 2020). The meaningfulness of the group, according to Facebook, is established by means of surveys, monitoring how much time people spend in these groups and interestingly, how many of their friends are also the members of these groups (CNBC 2020).

These groups within social networks are centers of very subjective judgements and subjectivity as such. “Participatory Culture” (Jenkins 2006), shows the resistance that such a network can offer to the influences streaming into it from the outer world. There is indeed a clear separation between these groups and the outer world due to the ideological, or rather a sub-ideological backbone that helps form such a group. The observation made by Tocqueville, still proves to be correct and very actual in contemporary society in particular: “...tyranny leaves the body free and directs its attack at the soul. The ruler no longer says: You must think as I do or die. He says: You are free not to think as I do; your life, your property, everything shall remain yours, but from this day on you are a stranger among us” (Mariotti 2016: xii).

However, the ruler now is replaced by a social movement or a fact of belonging to a particular social group that has its own ideology, or sub-ideology and values. The whole concept of authority is, in a certain way, evened out, negating the centers of authority, however, creating centers of sub-ideology. The authority becomes more a question of adherence to the “correct” values. The ruler in this sense is a social movement. Social movement, being centered around their sub-ideology, thus reproduce their own norms and values. Their subjects are all in a sense, “readers”, being centers of everlasting and fragmented interpretation. The essay “The death of an Author” by Roland Barthes (1975) forestalled the Lyotard’s “the loss of meaning” (Lyotard 1983: 26) and heralded the “Death of an Author” as an authentic source of meaning which in turns puts the narratives and their social bond supportive characteristic under the doubt. Here, an author as a narrator is dismantled and the narratives lose their social potency and become somewhat meaningless in frames of social bonding. Barthes states that with the death of an author comes “the birth of a reader” which is clearly seen in contemporary society in which there

is a significant advent of those who consume and interpret images, short texts, video files as they will.

The internet is a good manifestation of the abovementioned, where the followers of various groups interpret the information from their subcultural standpoint and in many cases vigorously attack the piece if the latter does not correspond to their subculture and beliefs. Thus, the possibly objective interpretation of a text and a meaning becomes practically impossible as the subjectivity is predominant through readers who belong to diversified social groups and subcultures. This is a postmodern “floating structure” that is lacking the persistent teleological meaning creation that is not called to bring the meaning, but rather is open for endless interpretation and filled by the methods of telling the story more than with the meaning. The methods convey the way things must be done, evading the meaning. In this case, the structure of contemporary narratives is constituted with “Pre-Understanding” (Heidegger 1996), with the methods of conduct and with the open and perpetual interpretation by the reader (viewer, listener and etc.). The last point is the most treacherous one as the reader is represented by the highly decentralized society the particles of which interpret the information according to sub-ideology of their social group, thus, creating a profound subjectivity that clashes with other bottomless subjective approaches from other social groups.

“The Birth of a Reader” is a meaning applicable to both, online and offline spheres which merge in one single Simulacrum of reality. This tendency had been significantly reinforced by the unfortunate COVID-19 Pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns, locking the population already plagued by the “virtualization” of life even more in its virtual sub-reality. Randall Collins' concept of intelligent networks, according to which the significance and productivity of the subject are determined by the position in the communicative space, turned out to be true for social networks and digital life as well. One cannot function efficiently within the contemporary society without being constantly update regarding the state of affairs within the particular social movement which an individual follow. Being torn away from a constant stream of information, an individual becomes immediately obsolete in terms of sub-ideological filler of the movement. Guy Debord mentions that mass media become one of the main instruments of socialization. However, in contemporary time of rampant technological progress the decentralized and privatized media platforms reinforce this notion as well as the notion of the “Artificial World of Images” (Debord 1994). A little change that is however, needs to be added is the “Artificial World of Rapidly Changing Images”. These images, construct sources of information or knowledge, yet in its Postmodern incarnation.

According to Horkheimer and Adorno, under the Modernity and Enlightenment, the reason and knowledge have been self-legitimizing (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979) (knowledge for the sake of knowledge). In this context, during Enlightenment, in its turn, it was implied that the learning and interest in new intend to discover the truth, the latter,

is one of the cornerstones of both Enlightenment and Modernity. As mentioned by Adorno and Horkheimer, the “project” of Enlightenment had been centered on the “disenchantment” of the world, i.e. on the dissolution of the myths which have served as pillars for the maintenance of the mythical and religious belief system (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979: 3–6). This, in its turn entails the need of mechanism of truth which would exhibit the movement towards the truth. It is a significant element of the notion of progress and progressive view on history towards the goal of utopian or semi-utopian state of being. Such a view on history is possible only with the developmental curve behind it and where the progress serves as a perfect tool for this, giving the much-needed comparisons to that what is available, that what should and will be available as well as creating certain projections into the future. From this, stems the concept of the “True World” which exists out there and the humanity must reach and discover the Truth and build their own paradise on Earth based on this Truth. Nietzsche connects the vision of the “True World” (Nietzsche 1996: 92) to the Christian interpretation of the world where the truth is connected to the truth of God and cannot be disputed which is a precursor of a utopian world-view. Therefore, the Truth is considered to be optimistic in itself, while it leads the society to the brighter future. In this article, however, it will be shown that with the dismantling of Truth the belief in its optimism as well as the belief in the brighter future wanes and thus opens the way to more and more pessimism that is visible through the dystopian trends in centralized mass culture, radicalization of various social movements and so on and so forth. Nietzsche, by his attempt to question the virtue of knowledge through pessimism that is associated with the versatility of Truth, does indeed succeed for the dismantling of Truth had led the society to much pessimism about its own future.

In connection to the truth of God, it is of much worth mentioning the Cartesian self which according to Rene Descartes is the reason driven by sanity, which is a universal reason possessed by all people because it derived and given birth to by God. Human and divine minds are the minds of light and therefore minds of belief that through the light constitute truth and generate truth on the way to the creation of future of light which is the light of God (Descartes 2017). In contemporary time, however, the concept of the Cartesian self is hardly applicable to the society which stopped to be the unified whole (Lyotard 1983: 13), unified by the light of God or by culture but rather presents itself as the selection of highly atomized social groups. Cartesian self, though, might still be applicable today in terms of the belief in his or her own rightfulness and truth of their particular social movement and sub-ideology. The Cartesian self is not connected to the society as a “Unified whole” anymore, but rather could be applicable to the broken-down dysfunctional narratives of social movements which strongly and blindly believe in their truth – “Darkness of invincible ignorance” as put forth by Pierre Daniel Huet (1725). The

ideas of a “True World” and a better future are directly connected to the utopian or semi-utopian vision of the future which is being significantly eroded in contemporary time. The notion of Truth as universal that previously helped to sustain perhaps, the futuristic idea of Rational World and Bright Future, enabled people to believe in progress and future as a better place to live in, during Modernity. However, the notion of Bright Future is fading away from the conciseness of the masses and on the contrary an Anti-utopia (dystopia) becomes a more popular concept, let alone the popularity of films of this genre generated by the culture industry (Schmidt 2014). This, as well, signifies the absolute retreat of the Grand Narrative and the “collapse of the past and the future into the present” (Perniola 1995: 74). Therefore, Postmodernity makes unacceptable the rules and principles that claim to be universally true (Lyotard 1983: 43). Thus, one position cannot be absolutely dominant, for there is a plurality and equality of positions and if one position begins to dominate, this ultimately leads to oppression.

In contemporary time of the incredible plurality of values that spring up better than any mushrooms in the autumn forest, the Metanarratives or a bigger Truth is broken down into the multiple smaller truths that exist here and now and that function within particular social groups or movements that possess their own rationalities as well as certain language games and sub-ideologies. As had been pointed out by Derrida, through the *Différance* (Derrida 1982: P3). we learn better and in theory can come closer to cast aside the rigid dogmatism, however, through the “wandering play of differences” (*Différance*) there is a contemporary wandering play of dogmatic thinking, inherent to this or that social movement. The differences that are called to show us how to see and listen to “distinction”, only lead us to the atomized sub-ideologies in which it is comfortable to stop listening and let the differences remain so and be left unheard. Such is the attitude of Postmodernity to objectivity and returning to Deconstruction which had been a significant milestone on the way to the establishment of Postmodernity, it is viable to mention that it has no clear guidelines or rules as their presence would have a contradiction with its whole essence.

Nonetheless, with the cancelation of the Metanarratives or the bigger Truths, all previously existing methods of the description of the world and its vision are also being cancelled and substituted by multiple rationalities and constantly alternating experiences. Thus, Postmodernity accepts the idea of instability of truths and rejects determinism as such as well as endorses the multiplicity of interpretations of knowledge (or information) which purely depends on the experiences that are subjected to variations. The gaining of the experience, in turn, becomes a crucial step, which on its own is a process of creation of the perfect for a particular individual reality. The created through the experience perfect reality is usually channeled and structure through the adherence to the sub-ideological movement and is not an independent one and is not in the crucial for the meaning, contact with the reality around. It is inspired and upheld by



the experience bringing it to life and by the fragmentation of perception of knowledge which is considered legitimate if it belongs or suits the sub-ideology of a social group to which an individual belongs at the given moment of time. Sub-ideology in itself is an idea or rather an attempt to change the existing state of affairs in particular matters. This type of ideology is not majestic enough as Metanarratives and focuses on its target group and a particular sphere of life. In other, words, the approach the atomization of which is conducted in best traditions of Postmodernity. For instance, the Anthroposophy, esoteric movement that takes roots from spiritualism of the beginning of the XX century, now being reinforced manifold by the social networks. Nowadays, this movement created multiple problems and barriers when fighting COVID-19 Pandemic in Germany and had been the center of scandalous and charlatan practices, most notably in the medicine sphere (The Guardian 2021). The judgements, stemming from the Sub-ideological motivations are not any better than any other moral judgements that in their turn resemble religious judgements, thus making the distinction between real and imaginary less and less palpable. "Truth at this level refers to all sorts of things which today we call "fantasies" (Nitzsche 1997: 38).

The creation of experiences in this context, is a process of learning, however of a fragmented learning that is inspired and biased through a collective belonging to a particular sub-ideology that gives certain models of learning to its followers. The learning in the framework of formation of experiences consists of the process in which the existing images, forms and objects are superseded by others, through the models of learning. These models entail the increase of numbers of alternative universities that are not much connected to the academic core of a particular country or the sphere of activity as a whole. The experiences formed are at the same time moved from being local and somewhat standard to more universal if applicable and diverse. In their creation, an individual undergoes through various interchanges and comparisons between emotional and rational perceptions, between remote and close, orderly and chaotic, past and future, known and unknown and many others. Thus, the process of learning and following it formation of experiences entail the relationship between meanings and comparisons through which the experience is created. Through learning and gained experiences one can interact more efficiently with the world which is read and structured accordingly.

Lyotard refers to the formation of competences in traditional societies through their traditions (Lyotard 1983: 19). Namely, that person who is a traditionalist is at the same time considered to be competent and thus can assess reality more competently (Lyotard 1983). In the Postindustrial or rather in the Postmodern society, the formation of competences takes a different route. Nevertheless, the atomization of society and appearance of multitude of social groups and movements presents a unique opportunity for the atomization of competences as well, meaning the competences that function only

within a particular social group and that are perceived as such mostly by the followers of the social group. Consequently, the patterns of traditional societies in terms of competences, can be traced to the contemporary social groups in which the one who cultivates the ideas of the group or follows them if not fanatically but loyally is considered to be competent within the group framework, at least by the progenies of the movement or of the groups with similar ideologies. Though, such an adherence cannot be called a tradition per se, an active following of the group's ideology/values/ideas during the extended period of time, which involves repetition after repetition of particular practices by the members of a social movement or group, becomes in a certain way highly resemblant of a tradition, although perhaps, a postmodern iteration of it. Such wise, the competences within the particular nucleus are formed and venerated by its members.

This, however, becomes rather problematic when the perception of competences takes an inter-group character, in other words, the assessment of the competence by the members of other social groups during discussions or at any other event. Given the fact that various social groups have various ideological backgrounds and subcultural filler, the achievement of a pan-group competence becomes a utopian notion. The perception of competence occurs within the framework of a social group, i.e., the speaker is not perceived competent a priori by other parties for he or she does not meet the needed requirements of other groups. The narratives and a relatively objective perception of reality stop functioning on the inter-group level in those cases where the mixed groups are present. This is the problematic of the narratives as well as the problematic of knowledge which stopped being a subject on its own but rather falls into "the service of a subject" (Lyotard 1983: 36) and becomes very practical and subjected to the ideas of a particular subject or group/movement.

The objective, knowledge which is a subject on its own is practically diminished to an information flow and in the best-case scenario to the form of an ideal which theoretically can exist but practically is very far from it. In order for the knowledge to be as close as possible to objectivity, it must exist for itself: knowledge for the sake of knowledge. If this criterion is not fulfilled, it tends to gravitate towards subjective purposes instead of objectivity. However, what can be contemplated in contemporary society is more and more often the knowledge (or rather information) for the subject that in turn creates the sense of belonging to the particular topic or idea and propagating it from within. This, generates a strong sense of adherence and as a result in many cases leads to biases and blatant superficiality, subjectivity and moral judgements stemming from the sub-ideology or "their truth".

In order to judge objectively, one must look at the issue from outside without the strong sense of belonging to the distinct side of the issue/discussion. (Here, much could be said on Bourdieu's (1984) Habitus, the concept which would much fit into the mentioned above. However, the space of another article would be needed to cover this

topic.) When there is lack of neutral judging, but a lot of moral judgement, the balanced civilized discourse that strives to consensus or to understanding which is the task of democracy (to be precise its side of the conflict settling mechanism), is practically ruled out of possible options. What is seen nowadays, are the multitude of social groups, the sub-ideologies of which hold rather militant stance and are distinguished for their intolerance to the plurality of notions that do not correspond to their truths.

For instance, one of the movements that gains momentum more and more and presents the decay of the narratives and practically neglects democracy as a conflict settling mechanism is “Cancel Culture” (or in some sources Public/Online shaming). The movement comprises mostly the younger generations who are willing to attack anybody or any entity, be that social, political or economic entity in case they made offensive statements regarding women rights, race, LGBTQ (q stands for “Queer”) communities and anything else that potentially can upset an individual or a group of individuals in terms of their freedoms (Prasad 2020). Functioning democratic institutions are of an essence in the resolution of conflicts within the society and political spectrum. Democracy facilitates the plurality of opinions and is supposed to teach the coming and to remind the already present generations that there are opinions other than their own and promotes the civilized discussions (knowing how to listen and hear), debate and “Diskurs” in which the opposing parties are called to hear the argument of each other and to come to a consensus (Habermas 1987). The latter is not possible without hearing each other and this is the task of democratic institution – to be able to listen to and also to hear the other opinion. Thus, through “Diskurs” the achievement of consensus is possible, provided that the conditions that comprise the “Diskurs” are recognized by the participants. The argumentation and its analysis must come closer and ideally become a social practice through which the competency of arguers will be adequate.

The internet, enhances the atomization of texts, images etc., following the atomization of society as a whole. In the light of the continuing and intensifying break down of Metanarratives or of bigger Truths, the atomized societal entities pick up the “debris” and create their own Truth directions that manifest themselves in social groups, multiple values and sub-ideologies with sub-realities. These, realities are at times twisted derivatives of the particular hyped events or trends and therefore, can be called “sub-realities” while they are secondary copies with the lost meaning of the original and are very often short lived (hyped).

In the best-case scenario, these sub-realities are copies of the actual real state of surroundings. In many cases, however, the sub-realities are very much distorted and perverted copies of reality. These, represent and promote the rejection of realism in any iteration of it, creating a certain vicious circle that manifests itself, e.g. in the dismantling of the narrative of an author and substitution of it by the “narrative” of a reader who is

empowered to give the meaning to the text hence “The Death of the Author” by Barthes [Barthes 1975]. Thus, the sculpture of Daedalus becomes alive and heralds the death of the Author and the birth of the reader. In such a way, the meaning of a written text, a shown picture or a video clip, is stripped away from it, however, attached anew and perhaps in a different form by the diverse recipients of the text, which renders the original meaning of it, practically nonexistent and meaningless for the reader.

In the contexts of multitude of distorted copies of reality, it is viable to mention “Hype” which itself is a phenomenon that is growing (perhaps unfortunately) in its popularity and importance in contemporary time. It reflects the Postmodern fragility of prolonged ideas (perpetual introduction of “new” into the social strata) and is characterized by its rather short-lived but bright flash. In other words, Hype is the increase of circulation of a particular happening in order to attract as much attention to it as possible [Cambridge Dictionary 2020]. In a certain way it resembles the Communist mobilization of the masses in order to achieve a certain task. These hype happenings can be circulated in mass media but mostly nowadays they spread through the internet and through various independent/private media platforms maintained by a group of bloggers or just by a single individual. The hype in most of the cases represents the texts torn from their respective contexts and from their respective text bodies and presented as a certain flash of an idea for which the followers of the movement/group are mobilized.

It must be said, that images (as the contemporary West European culture is a culture of a visualizations) are the products most torn out of the context and show only a particular moment without any chance to establish what are behind the frames of that moment. The image-based judgements, that are many, are the most biased and distorted. There are countless examples of hype, for instance, the G20 protests in Hamburg, Germany, multiple “Anti-Corona” (COVID-19) measures protests in Berlin, Germany, surprisingly the Green protests against environmental pollution, Cancel Culture movement and last year’s Black Lives Matter protests. The latter and their violence, had been significantly fueled by the images, unsurprisingly torn out of their respective contexts. These events, represent a failure of democracy to function as a conflict settling mechanism and the break-down of truths play here one of the foremost roles. The latter, Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests are the good example of the prevalence of the methods of conducting or expressing oneself over any teleological or constructive filler.

Although, the cause of the protests is present and understandable, the chosen methods that were called to show their brutality and destruction are questionable as well as the absurdity of liquidation of the police force as a regulating authority. The discussion with the followers of BLM about the methods and the constructive approach had been far from possible due to the rampant militancy and the absolute inability to hear the other point of view. The narratives behind this are creating a certain sub-reality for the followers with a disregard to facts that can undermine the aggressiveness of the

movement. The BLM movement did not appear out of nowhere and its potential had been growing within the “Cancel Culture” (CC) movement the militancy of which is undoubted and which is highly critical towards those who disagree with their line (Prasad 2020). Thus, BLM is the aftermath of the expanding ideological superstructure of Cancel Culture movement which had been hampering all spheres of contemporary western culture and science with an absolute barbaric disregard towards the Democracy not only as a Conflict Settling Mechanism but as a whole.

For instance, recently hundreds of prominent writers, scientists and others have signed an open letter against the respective intolerant and militant movement [BBC News 2020]. The CC movement, having their own sub-reality and sub-ideology pays no respect to the freedom of speech, the concept of which does not obviously ring any bell and the narrative of which does not come through their constructed sub-reality and myths in which they dwell. Such an intolerance of the mass can be compared only to the “Dictatorship of the proletariat” of Marx and Engels. The ability and the trait conveyed by Narratives on “How to Listen” is clearly diminished in form and lost its credibility in the eyes of the multitude of the followers of these movements.

Likewise, recently, Berlin saw (and continues to see) more than fifteen thousand of protesters who did not hold any distance between themselves, wore no facial masks and were protesting against the very existence of COVID-19 as well as against the governmental measures to keep the virus under control (Deutsche Welle 2020). They had been naturally heralded as “Covidiot” (or “Querdenker”) (Deutsche Welle 2020) which is quite a fair name, considering their disregard of other opinions and more sadly, disregard of high risks that the virus bears for other people. This movements, represents the perfected sub-reality in which its followers exist, being torn away from the real happenings and the real threat from the virus and means to fight it.

These movements and social groups represent a wave of contemporary informed but ignorant Barbarism that is unable to hear anything and no one else, apart from their own “Truths” which is disconnected from the other matters taking place in the world. The other representation taking place in contemporary time and visible so well through the above-mentioned movements is the Resurrection of a Myth in the Western Societies, a Myth the existence of which had been fought that valiantly during the Enlightenment (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979: 3–6) and that had been seemingly defeated, only to resurrect in the XXI century at the height of the development of the Western Civilization.

The contemporary Myth is, however, spoiled by the concepts of radical freedom and with the ongoing radicalization of this concept. The movement for freedom begins to wrap itself in the sub-reality of their own not seeing and not heeding the achievements that have been achieved but rather seeing only the further radical steps to demise any concept of authority in front of them and any concept of responsibility, as well as the

responsibility for the system which they reject with ever increasing vehemence. The “Student Protests of 1968” (Richard 2009) had been the precursor to the events that are contemplated nowadays with the logical intensification and radicalization which is the result of the lost battle for the minds of the people.

Through this radicalization it is clearly visible that the Binary Oppositions have retreated and more importantly their functionality that forces the opposing parties to know and inquire about each other’s views and as a result to be able to listen. With the death of Binary Oppositions, the familiarization with other parties’ ideas and worldview is abandoned and as a result the society finds itself, practicing the cult of youth with its hot temperament, recklessness and is at the doorstep of intolerance and militancy of ideas.

### **3. Conclusion**

Millions of social movements and groups are reinforced and exist through the social networks of internet, amalgamating interested individuals into herds of motivated and ideologically charged followers who are permanently bombarded by the information only relevant to their sphere of interests as per the algorithms of the social networks. Everything that is out of scope of that ideology is left behind, creating not only a vacuum of “Binary Oppositions”, the notion of which is of utmost importance in the leading of the basic “Diskurs” but also psychologically essential in our ability to fathom the basic binary difference, not mentioning the “wandering play of differences” that we observe but are unable to fathom and listen to.

Thereby, the algorithms of social networks help channel the society into spheres of their interests and feeds them only with, so called, relevant information, never showing the real differences that are out there but artificially kept out of sight. The multiple social movements and groups, thus exist only through the internet and are fed and bred by it. This superstructure, shall it unfathomably collapse or loose influence, will leave millions lost in their ideas, sobered, and awakened to see that they are surrounded not by the information fed to them through the greedy for money algorithms, but by the multifaceted reality, the dwelling in which needs much more skill and adaptation rather than blatant digital consumerism, that constructs notions of omni-consumerist attitude lacking constructivism, but breeding solely demands and wish to destruct the surroundings that contradict to the ideological paradise observed on the screen of our so much venerated devices. This, in a sense is a Communism decentralized mobilization 2.0 that Europe is facing.

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