

## MEDIABULIMIA LIKE CONSEQUENT OF BEING IN VIRTUAL NETWORKS

**Abstract:** *Our modern reality is full of changing, is very stressful and faster than ever before. Of course this is merit of technology. But as long as technology brings us advantages, it's also concealing a threat. And this is what I want to talk about. The article proposes to consider the allocation of a new disease, which in fact is a psychophysiological disorder and is associated with the excessive dominance of media resources in our lives – mediabuloma. The causes of the appearance of this disease (the loss of message value, the desire to be constantly up to date, aggressiveness of modern media, dosage of information etc.), its symptoms (attention loses its function of focusing and dissipates, the need of continuous approval, the stereotyping of thinking, the loss of identity and personality of the individual, the distraction of attention while waiting for an answer etc.) and consequences (stratification of consciousness) are described in detail.*

**Keywords:** *Mediabulimia, Mediophilosophy, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, stereotyping of thinking, delamination of consciousness.*

A special place in modern science takes an understanding of media. Media pursues a civilized society everywhere, creating separate disciplines and conceptual apparatus of mediaphilosophy as a new turn of the development of philosophy, a new aspect of the development of philosophy. After all, media postulate not just a new concept, but also a whole new reality – media reality.

Marshall McLuhan, whom we have a right to consider as one of first researchers in the field of the ecology of mass-culture, used to speak about the mosaic and fragmentation of media-culture. In my opinion, such fragmentation and heterogeneity of the received messages were the first prerequisite for developing the habit of collecting shattered images. In particular, about the means of communication McLuhan writes: "...automation creates roles for people, which is to say depth of involvement in their work and human association that our preceding mechanical technology had destroyed. Many people would be disposed to say that it was not the machine, but what one did with the machine, that was its meaning or message" [1, p. 9]. That is, having received new tools, a person simply began to spend less energy on something that took a lot of time and focused on the quality of communication, up to the feeling of empathy. Gary Small, professor at the University of California Los Angeles, in his book "iBrain: Surviving the Technological Alteration of the Modern Mind" writes: "Once people get used to this state, they begin to feel the need for a permanent connection to some kind of information. This inclusion feeds their "self" and a sense of self-importance, this feeling becomes charming" [2, p. 56]. Michael Harris author of the book "The End of Absence: Reclaiming What We've Lost in a World of Constant Connection" mentions about it, analyzing his own experiences: "Probably, and I feel my importance by responding to all the calls and connection requirements that are pouring on me like from cornucopia. Probably I'm really a very important person. I need everything, without me it is impossible to do, I'm in demand. But after several years of editorial work, something radically changed in my attitude to calls. What exactly?" [3, p. 21]. Small, among other things, writes that the atmosphere with high level of interrupt frequency of messages makes our adrenal glands produce cortisol and adrenaline in large quantities. In a short time, these hormones of stress increase energy levels, enhance memory and sharpen attention. But then they also violate cognitive abilities, leads to depression and damage the neuronal chains of the hippocampus, tonsils and prefrontal cortex – those parts of the brain, which are responsible for mood and thinking. Chronic, prolonged overwork, caused by nowadays technology, can lead to morphological changes in deep structures.

Technology itself goes beyond the moral and ethical categories. They are not evil and not good, but dangerous and beloved. This is the danger we have been in love for many millennia. But we rarely remember that, for example, the purpose of human relations can go beyond the efficient transmission of information. However, the devotion of communication, in which technologies are intermediaries (if in the coming years we will destroy ourselves, then this will not be due to a lack of communication, but rather from inability to more sophisticated communication methods), that is, the restless desire to make life as open as possible – very often amaze ourselves.

Let's consider our irrepressible passion to online activity. By 2012, humanity has sent requests to Google more than trillion times a year (in one hundred and forty-six languages). Every day, people send one hundred and forty four billion emails to each other. In 2013, we put "likes" four and a half billion times on Facebook every day. (If there was a possibility to put 'dislikes' on Facebook, probably, this figure would have increased). Every minute we downloaded 100 hours of video on YouTube. And every second – six hundred thirty seven photos in Instagram. The content of our multi-faceted network existence has taken such monumental forms that we can not dismiss it, as from some minor addition to real life.

Stunning speed with which digital technologies span the world causing fear: over the past decade, the number of Internet users has increased by five hundred sixty-six percent. The social environment brings mass behavior – half of Internet users communicate with friends and relatives on Facebook, with Americans doing it in 59 per cent of cases (and college students – 93 per cent). The amount of time which is devoted to electronic devices means that we are tearing it off from other aspects of our lives. We reassure ourselves that while distracting on a phone or tablet, checking email – it takes only a few seconds. But it is estimated that in 2012, Americans spent 520 precious billions of minutes each month on connecting to the Internet. This number exceeded the previous year's figures by more than 100 billion minutes. We must remember: it's not just a quantitative boost of what was before. The Internet is not only enriches our life experience, it becomes our life experience. This was said by Susan Greenfield, a British scientist, writer, broadcaster, explorer of impact of technology on the brain, Professor at Oxford University: A car or plane allows you to travel faster and at distant distances. I am worried about that modern technologies have ceased to be a means and begin to turn into a goal. The Internet becomes a goal in itself and for itself.

But on the other hand, while increasing the flow of the received, and reducing the effort, the value of such received – is

lost and the view on this received thing begin to be obscure. This is noted by V. Savchuk in the book "Mediaphilosophy: attacks of reality": "As far as media, widening our horizons, brings things closer, they determine not only what we perceive, but also what **we do not perceive**". [4, c. 84]. This formulation of everyday life changes the habits of perception translates it into a new speed and builds a new reality – the mediareality. Therefore, it is not surprising that having a new reality means having new illnesses within it.

To study this issue I had to use not so much theoretical data as empirical by observing and analyzing.

It is clear that with the development of media resources the access to a variety of information was received by anyone who sought it. The knowledge is the power. The more individual knows, the more his value increases, the more popular he becomes in his social surroundings. In its turn, ignorance in topical issues of chosen social group throws a person beyond the boundaries of this group. Thence, average man on the street, trying to be constantly "in the subject line" receives a huge amount of information of different quality and relevance. In order not to miss anything "necessary" he is forced to look for it in a diverse, discarded, disorganized informative string. Social networks, like conglomerates of communication, further exacerbate the situation. You should take my point that everything monotonous cannot hold up attention for a long time, unless, of course, a person suffers from mental disorders. And because of the aggressiveness of the images of modern megacities, a person is forced to search for his eyes, his consciousness, something new and pleasant, so that it does not irritate, but soothe the eyes and thoughts. And the easiest way is to get it without leaving your place, through your information transfer device. It's easier to see the mountains in the net than to go to the ski resort. And it's even more pleasant, not just to find and look at it, but if someone will share precious pictures with you, will pay attention and it's even better, if it will be a person whom you like. It brings pleasure, and people, as you know, tend to follow something that brings them pleasure.

But the same type of information quickly annoys too. Therefore, a purely textual stream of information is diluted by a variety of other images – visual or audible (photo, replaced by video, text, music, etc.). And the developers of social networks themselves spend a lot of time trying to create picture the most diverse and close to the real communication. To do this, they come up with countless smiles and animated messages. Moreover, social networks are full of attractive, often changing ad units. They trying to do everything, do not make a person feel bored, in the largest networks in personal communication can be divided and all other content, which a hundred times diversifies the process of communication and brings more pleasure. Furthermore, in the majority of large networks in private communication we can share all other contents, those in hundred times diversifies the process of chatting and brings more joy.

On the other hand, it's hard to swallow a large mass at once, that's why the **information is given in doses**, in small capacious messages that do not take much time or effort to perceive, do not require attention of accentuation, but also find almost no response to the consciousness of those who received it. Like an example of this can serve endlessly scrolled news feed-post of "friends" in the network. Rarely when they fill in more than a few phrases, they are often supplemented with photographs, but they never end. As a consequence, **attention loses its function of focusing and dissipates**. The process of focusing attention is extremely difficult; there were numerous psychologists' works devoted to it. The work of attentive regulators requires the expenditure of mental effort, the volume of which is limited. "Each individual has a certain set of regulators and developed in varying degrees, skills and acquired habit of their use. Some people spend less effort

to get into an optimal state and can regulate the information flow in a variety of situations and in solving divers, even routine tasks. For example, the cashier rhythmically presses the keys of the cash register, as if playing on a musical instrument". [5, c. 252] Consciousness, being in a state of increased excitement and hyperactivity, does not make any reflection on the received information, perceiving, but not comprehending it. This process is akin to eating food. If you continuously swallow everything without chewing a thing, then the saturation moment is realized with a delay, representing a qualitative overload, and as a result, causing a sharp rejection and a "recurrent reflex". The frequency of such processes, soon, can develop a pathological illness – bulimia.

**Mediabulimia**, as well as the ordinary, is a **psycho-physiological disorder**, during which "gluttony" of easy accessible "food", replaced by aversion and artificially induced "vomiting", i.e. refusal to obtain information (in the context of this work – a stay in the state of offline), or a restriction to the critical minimum required, which will soon be replaced by an attack of "gluttony" shortage and self-flagellation for the previous period of failure.

Such unhealthy periodicity contributes to the development of depressive conditions, psychosomatic disorders and resembles the periodicity of manic-depressive psychosis or sadomasochistic dependence.

One of the main reasons for the development of media bulimia in general, and in social networks in particular, is **attention deficit hyperactivity syndrome**, which has its own causality.

The main function of all social networks is communication. But communication, in and of itself, does not make problems, that cannot be said about the constant need for communication, as interpersonal "stroking". "Stroking is such interaction of one person with others, in which he directs his attention to a partner, and, referring to him, signals that he recognizes presence of this person or himself as a Personality. During this, partner experiences these or other emotions and feelings. Stroking is not necessarily a physical touch. Stroking is a smile, a compliment, and support, and words that emphasize the importance of a person". [6].

So, non-significant exchange with messages, often limited to a few phrases, can be functionally equated with "stroking", because **communication is a manifestation of interest, attention and often the very fact of interest is more important than filling the conversation**. Thus, *the constant need for messaging can be classified as the symptoms of mediabulimia*. What is more, these messages often do not carry any new information, being only linguistic clichés, such as questions about affairs, about weather; when the interlocutor is not so important, as what exactly you will answer, as the fact of the answer itself.

*The second symptom is the distraction of attention while waiting for an answer*. This insignificant period of time a person tries to fill in with something that is not burdensome, insignificant, so as do not get carried away and do not go off the topic of the "main conversation". He looks through short background information that does not evoke any response in the psyche, replacing some sensations – by others (text – photo – video): consciousness is eluding, attention is not focused, framed in **attention deficit disorder**, which is both *the cause and symptom* of mediabulimia.

The last important *symptom-consequence* of the development of media bulimia is **the stereotyping of thinking, the loss of identity and personality of the individual**. The person, constantly being saturated with unnecessary, popularized, but useless information, gradually gets used to think "like everyone else", choosing and responding positively, to those notices which received the most "stroking", hoping to get "stroking" in response. These are the same people who always know everything, they were at all times.

They just need to be aware of all the latest events of "their village", but as Marshall McLuhan said, the modern man of the electronic society who actively uses the means of communication already senses the whole Earth, the whole space around him as one global village where news is transmitted as quickly as the speaker can spread them on the Internet. Of course, it's impossible to know "everything in the world", but a person with a mediabulimia tries to do it with big deal of passion.

It is worth to tell about some **"stratification of consciousness"**. When a person, with his own thoughts, tries to cover several processes at the same time (for example, to think over previous message and, at the same time, watching the video) this creates an aggravated form of attention deficit. Then, even during being outside of the social network, or actively absorbing informative matter, a person feels the need for "multi-channel thinking", trying to make thoughts flow as if on two chosen topics simultaneously. But, of course, this applies only to the same type of information, such as "text-text", in other cases, the streams do not intersect. An indicator of this stratification is unconscious thinking, such as, dreams. When in a dream, user can see a picture being viewed, along with the typed text, as if through a screen.

Naturally, **that the most susceptible to mediabulimia are teenagers and children**, the most active users of virtual reality, the most impressionable, having the most unstable consciousness, unlike the stable psyche of adults. But I would like to note that the more time is going away, the more mature become people, who have been growing up already with the devices in their hand, for which this rate is not so terrible, but more familiar. On the other hand, the generation of gamers, this is not only small children and teenagers, but often well-established personalities who in their spare time prefer active rest of different kind.

From the biological point of view, healthy person's brain is constantly in a state of filtering, processing and screening out the data, and this task is feasible, but with a small amount of information. According to the research of psychologists, attention is detained only on ten per cent of the received data, it falls even less into memory, the rest is not even fixed by our brain, as it is considered like unnecessary. A person, who is sick, tries to fix more until all the symptoms of mediabulimia come. But, perhaps, this is only a new turn in the development of civilization. The amount of information becomes larger and this is an irreversible process, therefore it remains to cherish the hope that our brain, our consciousness succumbing to such constant training, will overcome the mediabulimia and adapt to the new situation.

In addition, people should be informed about the possibility of the disease. Of course, in our country it is common when people feel indulgent to these kinds of illnesses, but this is only because of ignorance, non-acquaintance with the seriousness of the problem. There is a risk that the mediabulimia will be picked up simply as a beautiful and incomprehensible term, on which is very romantic to suffer,

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#### МЕДИАБУЛЕМИЯ ЯК НАСЛІДОК ПЕРЕБУВАННЯ У ВІРТУАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖАХ

У статті пропонується до розгляду виокремлення нової хвороби, яка по суті являє собою психофізіологічний розлад та пов'язана з надмірним засиллям медіа-ресурсів у нашому житті – медіабулемія. Детально описуються причини появи такого захворювання, його симптоми та наслідки.

Ключові слова: Медіабулемія, медіафілософія, синдром дефіциту уваги і гіперактивності, стереотипізація мислення, розшарування свідомості.

Одинець А.В.

#### МЕДИАБУЛЕМИЯ КАК СЛЕДСТВИЕ ПРЕБЫВАНИЯ В ВИРТУАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЯХ

В статье предлагается к рассмотрению выделение новой болезни, которая по сути представляет собой психофизиологическое расстройство и связана с чрезмерным засильем медиа-ресурсов в нашей жизни – медиабулемия. Подробно описываются причины появления такого заболевания, его симптомы и последствия.

Ключевые слова: Медиабулемия, Медиафилософия, синдром дефицита внимания и гиперактивности, стереотипизация мышления, расслаивание сознания.

as it was (and still is) with depression. It remains only to hope that media culture, media education will expand its field of activity, painting not only its advantages, but also all the dangers of media reality.

In this way, frequent users of virtual resources in general and social networks particular are in danger of developing a new but successfully progressing disease – mediabulimia, to which we must be treated with all caution and seriousness. The understanding of causes and consequences of mediabulimia in their interrelation is provided by mediaphilosophy – and thereby increases the chances of confronting mediabulimia and / or the possibility of reworking it in another way of thinking, developing the ability of our brain to perceive without rejection.

Analyzing the current situation, one can observe some unpleasant consequences associated with excessive human presence in the media space, virtual space. Of these, one can distinguish: the need for constant connection to information, because of the fear of remaining alone with their thoughts (fear of loneliness), or because of fear of not being aware of the latest news and thus falling out of the social group; Psychological dependence on "strokes" or approval from the part of friends, or even not familiar people. Increasing the sense of self-importance, due to the receipt of a large number of calls and messages (which in the end can lead to chronic fatigue due to the constant development of the hormone of stress in the body); Such excessive, but superficial absorption of information negatively affects its adoption and can provoke attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Other negative consequences include stereotyping thinking, due to excessive consumption of popular information, inattention and linguistic clichés. But it should be noted that all these horrible pictures are not so compulsory if people will be remain to support self-discipline and self-awareness. Perhaps, such a transitional state is only a new turn in the bizarre victory of evolution and for subsequent generations such state of affairs won't be so amazing.

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