

## FORMATIVE FUNCTION OF THE MIRROR STAGE: VISUAL IMAGES IN THEIR HISTORY.

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**Abstract** .In this paper we have attempted to link at least three concepts. Firstly, the idea of J. Lacan about the function of the mirror stage in the formation of the subject. A detailed distinction is made between the Eye and the Glance for new technical means that did not fall within Lacan's view – photographs, videos and movies. The Eye is geometric: it allows one to build a plan of the place, a distance to objects in lines, squares, etc. The Glance masters the anthropological dependence on Eye, it immerses the viewer in the content of the visible: the I never see the Other from the place where the Other looks at me, which determines fragmentation of the subject in the very visual. The second concept that we have used is that the ideal I uses a set of figures created by numerous forms of culture – masks, puppets, photos, videos and film sequences, fragmenting a mirror image

of an individual. The visual fragments of a partitioned body-image often connect with the I only externally like I-consciousness-in outside. The third concept is associated with the answer to the question of how the real, the imaginary, the symbolic are “packaged” as in the case of relying on quite traditional forms of culture such as mask, doll, hand puppet, marionette, and using new means of “technical reproducibility” – photographs, video, movie. Image-statics - from mask to photo, allows the subject to somehow piece together one's self inner image, which forms the sustainability of the man's mental world, while movement images (video, body and movie eyes), due to their high image-dynamics, form the subject of scattering, existing as external image of oneself.

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## **1.TOPICALITY AND THEMATIZATION OF THE PROBLEM.**

The main issues of visual culture are the problems of interpretation, communication, image rhetoric. The visual turn returns us to the practices of totemism, fetishism, animism, i.e. reactivates mythological layers of consciousness. The urgent question is how to subjectivize the very visual image, in any image-picture – a mask, a doll, a puppet, a selfie photo, a movie character, etc. the symbolic weave is subjectified. What the advertisement wants is everything: money, fame, power, honors, love, etc. Desire lies in the very visual image. In one's history man has remained a creature of Desire, the modernity has changed one thing: an infantile subject does not know what he wants. The visual image as the View of the other puts its desire into the feminized subject, thus playing out the Master-Slave relationship in the field of subjectivity. The subject compensates

for the lack of oneself with a visual image, a monster hero, who constitutes the subject's empty space and individualizes it. Mask, clothing, fashion make the subject attractive to oneself, make up subjectivity, at least externally.

## **2.OBJECTIVE.**

What level the lack of oneself has reached, the identification of oneself exceptionally externally is evidenced by the demonization of visual culture products. In humanitaristics, modernity is called the society of the spectacle (Guy Debord), the power of simulacra (J. Baudrillard), the microphysics of power (M. Foucault), the dominance of idols and doubles (J. Derrida), etc. The objective of the work is an attempt to scale back the rhetoric of the monstrosity of visualization, remove a negative attitude towards images, give to the very visual products permission to speak in their history: from masks, dolls, puppets to their technical photograph amplifiers, film images, and in methods of subjectivization, individuation and individualization .

## **3.METHODOLOGY AND METHODS.**

Such complex visual objects require a combination of methodological procedures for structural analysis, phenomenology, hermeneutics, linguistic psychoanalysis.

Lacan claims that the subject is visible from the place of the Other, which means that I am born with my double. This Other is not a real other, but me, onto which I have projected my fears, anxieties, unfulfilled desires, etc. If the instance “I think” to Descartes centers the subject, then the Other to Lacan becomes the center-forming function of the ego. The Other is the nature of the image looking at us. The I fall into parts, into components: the I and Others, this fragmentation of being by myself [12]. If the unity that collects these persistent sets exists, then it has the shape of a fold. Foldable unity, what does it consist of, how and with what is it structured?

The self-alienating function of the “mirror stage” is that the lack of the Self creates a double, the image of the Self exists as something fabricated, artificial, enhanced today by the power of technical means – photography, cinema, video-selfie and other video projections, and remains split [11].

The image of the Other, which is premature for the ego subject, is originally about a child, partitions its body in a way that has nothing to do with anatomy. What to do with these dispersed parts, created by the mimetism of the Other’s approaching and moving away, numbness and immobility, bodily clumsiness, lack of coordination of the body and its organs. There is no other way to collect the Self, except to place myself in the form of consciousness-in-outside. Coming out-of-oneself is a disjointed, frightened, anxious, self-alienated individual who is forced in somewhere ahead, to another place, towards that is always ahead. The one who looks outside, this stranger, is not just the one who wanders somewhere nearby, without any purpose and sense, but aims to make room for the Self. In this Other there is room for the Self, the meanings in the Self come from the Other [10]. A good polysemy occurs when the relationship of the Ego and the Other develops gently, carefully, strictly, but fairly, dissemination is much more common – splitting, decomposition, deformation due to the hostility of the relationship of the Ego and the Other. There is no unity, there is no wholeness, in no place, at any time, the components

of the I, the fragments of images are not assembled on the edge of the Ego.

Doesn't it seem that the myth said about oneself with the help of "pictures", video images, requires more complex decryption than ingenuous slips of the tongue, slips of the hand and other writing errors. The channel of meaning is built by language. The written language is based on the logos. Freud made an attempt to "read" slips of the tongue, jokes, etc., having linked them with the psychopathology of everyday life, acting rationally, pushing the subject to meaning. I am the one who in one's unconscious looked uneasy, perverse, now I say: I am dissociated, displaced, frustrated and I admit it. This is a symbolic speech.

Modernity is changing the language of self-identification from the symbolic to the imaginary, instead of articulate speech, the researcher deals with visual backdrops of everything that is formed by the strategy to watch. The eye has superseded speech and the written word. The consciousness of a young girl who recognizes herself only with the help of a selfie is what is called outside consciousness, the consciousness that rushes up and down in some imaginary worlds, is always

against the background of something, next to someone. This fairy-tale dimension or fairy-tale peacemaking creates vague mythological worlds of the I "subject" that fully deserves these quotes, for it does not imply consciousness and meaning. Deleuze explains that simulacra are shorn of self-moving capability, they are always initiated by something external – the pleasure of self-presentation, advertising, money, etc. [6]. What makes a girl take off all her clothes, strike bizarre poses – the desire to slip into the simulation of something – sexuality, selling, prices, etc. And if one does not live inside one's own imaginary world? Refuse simulation? Here the subject confronts the real, something complex, indefinite, terrifying. We are given the revelations of the real only within the modes of consternation, if one follows M. Heidegger's judgment: it is not enough to worry about or take fright at something to go to the reality [15]. The dismaying reality is about to come where words die and ideas are helpless. Lacan explains: in order to be saved, one ought to slip into the imaginary and then into buffoonery, clowning, comic winking at each other, etc. Simulacra form points of junction, stabilization, which makes it

possible to survive. A preliminary conclusion is as follows: the real is unattainable, the imaginary is inevitable, the symbolic is possible, consequently, most of our lifetime flows within the unconscious. Derrida calls the modern era – the era of illusions, ghosts, he especially insists on the inevitability of duality in the work *Spectres of Marx* [7]. Modern man is a semi-Cephalus, attacked by a crowd of simulacra (G. Agamben), [1] attracted by one's fate to become acephalus, a person with having one's head deprived: a subject without a subject. The initial state of consciousness is unconscious, which still baffles us by putting us in the discourse of what consciousness is not - this is not the reason, this is not a word, this is not the reality. Another clarification: the unconscious, as repeatedly emphasized by Lacan, is not that it is hidden, it is not placed somewhere in the depths, on the contrary, it is always on the surface, right here, right next to it, before the very eyes. A brilliant example of this idea is the interpretation of Edgar Poe's short story *The Purloined Letter* by Lacan in one of his famous Seminars. [11]. The attack by the images of the Self creates tension in the subject, it scares one. The imaginary therefore cannot be the

consciousness of the whole, the single, because its every image matters depending on the “personal context” – variegated, capricious, arbitrary. Interpretation of the context requires addition of a symbolic instance: it is necessary to reduce the imaginary to a form of metaphor or metonymy, to discard the rest as refuse, falsehood, stray, nonsense. The discourse of the imaginary: “You are my wife, and you will follow me” requires decryption in order to get the subject out of the complex substance of ambiguities, and this can only be a speech in the register of the symbolic.

The stylistic complexity of Lacan's texts often makes full quoting impossible; translation into one's own language can incur the blame for our misunderstanding it.

It is extremely difficult to try to understand all the vagaries and whims of the imaginary, supported by modern technologies of augmented reality of hyped devices, rather, you should try to include into the analytics the cultural discourse that caused the appearance of the visual reality of our time. It is important for us to answer the question of how, for example, a selfie photo or video is connected with the existence of

consciousness out, the consciousness that is not internally related to itself, but “thinks” of itself exclusively externally as “I am-in-picture”. This is the consciousness which does not think, does not calculate, does not reason, but only looks. It looks like while sleeping, when the consciousness does not work, but dreams. The connection between cinema and dreams has long been well understood. What dreams has the world of cinema not immerse us into - life-long tedious serials, horror movies and film fiction, advertising, hyped design of houses, video performances, etc. [9] All this is enjoyable, the discourse of the imaginary gives pleasure, surprises, everyone wants to become involved in this enjoyment of meaninglessness. It is known that only a saint does not enjoy demonic pictures, is able to practice asceticism and “not to watch” all this garbage. Each of us needs a respite, because consciousness is difficult. However, when consciousness makes back, it is necessary to think again – until laughing, irony and joke, protest. What for? Laughter does not allow others to enjoy all kinds of visual widgets and stray things with impunity, as spoke Adolf Loo.

Visual discourse generated creatures that did not think, could not express grounded judgments, were deprived of articulated speech, such “working” bees, or even ticks (Uexküll) [1]. It is difficult for one to speak, to write – one has to learn, but adrenaline is thrown in via the picture unconditionally, immediately. Modern civilization has degraded from writing to an image where the subject never comes into contact with the real (the horror of the real is a syndrome of our epoch), the laws and forbidding of the symbolic can be neglected, the only I-real, bizarre, whimsical remains. Looking, examining closely, leveling looks on the surface of the real is a narcissistic occupation, which, among other things, produces non-communicability to the Other, loss of sociability, and lack of socialization.

The second question that we suggest discussing is: how is the real packed into the imaginary, what are the means the total visualization of the world achieved by? The list of techniques is not exhaustive, but some of them are quite obvious:

1. The speed of vision - to look so fast as to keep up with the movement of the very reality (Dziga Vertov, cinema eyes), or stop, hang over



a thing (Earth by Alexander Dovzhenko). The movement-stupor opposition works in the production of all visual products: in photography, video, film, advertising, etc.

2. The cut of visual patterns that the unconscious does, what we have learned from the dream – produces fragmentation, discontinuity, shot change, mark-up and montage of everything with everything. The red baseball caps of the victims and the red baseball cap of the killer in Lars von Trier's film *The House That Jack Built* is an example of a typical semantic montage: the symbol of red gives reference to the relationship between the sadist and the victim [6].

3. The time of visuality determines the overlap or influx of images, their thickening, as well as a tendency to close-up pictures, fixation on the details, circumstances, particulars, which is at the expense of wholeness. Lifting jack that is being looked at? Who is looking at – killer, victim, director, viewer or all together? The “quote” from the same film by Trier – maybe this means something, it makes sense to pay attention at, or maybe a thing is just a thing, an automobile's interior feature and nothing more.

4. The carnival of corporeality in the form of images of bodies and their fragments: in order to be examined, to be exposed to scrutinizing, all things must have some form, moreover, being created not by spiritual recreation of the whole, but precisely by the way of disengaging the world.

The imaginary is full of lacunae, interruptions of meaning, breaks in semantic contexture, leaps of thought, etc., which makes this consciousness only occasionally artistic, and to a greater extent – unconscious. “The dream evoked by the flight of a bee around a pomegranate a second before waking up” by Salvador Dali is quite pictorial, however, there is a suspicion that the artist cut off some fragments of the dream and then painted them with spirit.

Benjamin lost the uniqueness of what he called the aura of a work of art, attributed to the epoch of technical reproducibility [4,5]. However, the individual was shoved back to the periphery not at all by photography or high-speed pictures, by what we call a film. The art of painting (battle painting, for example), photography, cinema moved towards mass, it sought to become self-expression for the masses,

not for the individuals, because visual art is generally close to producing affects. It is the mass that lives by affects. Modern researchers unambiguously connect the origin of cinema with the emergence of the masses, that, through cinema, gained the right to individuation, as G. Deleuze said. A mass person appeared long before the cinema, the proletarians acquired their art and through it the right to subjectivity. But this was not the subjectivity of the individual, but was the affecting life of the masses. The imaginary is based on sensuality, permits to simulate. Scary films, fiction movies, photo shocks appear [3]. The advancement of the art of photography and cinema was preceded by other forms of visualization of reality, creating the image of the Other, who returned the subject to oneself – a mask, a doll, a puppet. The difference is that the visual Other movie or selfie does not collect the ego-subject, but places it outside. The mask and the doll are recursive, i.e. in reverse from the Other to the Self, the whole of the subject is collected, while self-photography and cinema create the products of dispersion. The consciousness of scatter is never within itself, always outside, in the fragments of mirrors that modern civilization readily

provides. Let us dwell on the differences in additional detail.

The ability of consciousness to skip-reject reality, to create a center of the I, to refer the self to the self, to work in the technique of the periphery-center was mastered via mask. The mask has a long history; it has circulated in Egypt, Italy, Japan, and China. Apparently, a particular inclination of certain cultures to masks requires special research.

The mask, as you know, has only slits for the eyes and mouth, this is necessary in order to minimize the flow of external impressions, to reject unnecessarily intense influences and thereby maintain a center of immobility. The purpose of the mask is to focus on oneself, provide an island of constancy in being. Note that a mask of an official, for example, only lets out the signals that allow not to lose a bureaucratic face, therefore no human suffering can affect them. Psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung wrote about the significance of a person (mask) in the structure of personality. Mask as the nearest wall or mirror (a small detail – the shine of the mask) discards, rejects too strong external influences, filters them and passes only those that can become material for the construction of the inner



world. If a person did not have protection from the world, he would find himself in a situation of being captured by being and even captivated by it, had to respond with affects, emotions, feelings to any stimulus from the outside, characterized by a sufficient degree of intensity. The paranoid fear of reality is one of the first childhood experiences, Lacan notes in his work “The Stage of the Mirror as the Formative Function of the I”. If a person is open to being, according to Heidegger and G. Agamben, who titled his philosophical essay “Open,” then this means that he is at risk of being captured by it. It is necessary to develop the cultural mechanisms of pause, delay of affect, stay in a daze and even constraint in order to be able to survive, i.e. to process external experience into the properties of the inner world. The mask just provides such a constraint in the strategy of watching: turns of the gaze left and right, up and down, etc. are difficult. Japanese Noh theater compels the actor to a slow, increasingly slow movement, in which you can't lose face. Obsession with being is not one of human virtues; concentration, restraint, and balance are necessary. Modern liberal culture is moving to opposite direction – to dissoluteness, hysteria.

Spinoza argues that openness to being gives place to the action of destructive affect, such as anger, hatred, envy, etc. The mask as a cultural form played a role in optimizing affects and turned the macrophysics of elements into the microphysics of movements.

The puppet gave the person more opportunities for mimesis. Plato wrote about the puppet, his desire to send art to a landfill is due to the fact that the imaginary cannot give a complete embodiment of the idea. The body presses itself to the idea and distorts it. Note that the imaginary puppet, for example, makes the Idea as a pure form dependent on its bodily embodiment. The puppet in its human likeness embodies the idea, and, the successes of its manufacture, the art of puppetry occasionally bring the resemblance to complete identity.

In this place one can refer to the famous fragment from the Fritz Lang film *Metropolis*, where the Master creates a monstrous creature – an automatic doll that reproduces all the movements, facial expressions inherent in a living girl.

Let us note two features in the identity of the systems of the real and the imaginary, the puppet and the living

creature. One of them relates to a glove puppet controlled by a human hand: the hand knows what it does, because it produces things, this is the knowledge nature of the puppet. Derrida discusses the fancywork of being, the “two-handed writing” in the context of Heidegger’s serious work *What is Called Thinking*. “Hand-handwriting-manuscript is what puts the word down for the eye.” [7] The second relates to the ability of the puppet to blink: to open and close its eyes, akin to the Bunuel sentence – a razor over the eyes (*An Andalusian Dog*). Or biblical, “If your eye seduces you, tear it and throw it away from you.” Do not look at – a prohibition and a plea for the human. To prohibit looking means to subordinate the external procedure of pressing the world through the eyes, in which the very hated obsession of being reveals itself, to the choice of the inner world the I. To react to being in one’s own way implies the ability to blink, temporarily close one’s eyes to something that scares, that can cause suffering, pain, death. It’s easy to look, this skill is immersed in the most archaic strata of the living in general, the obsession with being is placed on the border of the dead and the living, a person (an animal) sees it, a stone is

deprived of this ability. The distinction between the internal and the external cuts out the human body and the mental field along the boundaries of organs, where the Glance plays the main role in the art of “cutting and sewing”. The ability to look lies along the border of the living and the nonliving, and the look combines external vision with the internal choice of the subject, otherwise how can one explain that people do not see the same thing [13,14]. Unfortunately, we are deprived of the possibility of a lengthy commentary on the “Phenomenology of Perception” by M. Merleau-Ponty, since we are interested in the Lacanian concept of the “stage of mirror” and the place of the puppet in creating images, pictures of the world, i.e. shaping an imaginary strategy. The imaginary as any unconscious cannot be described with the concepts “what is it or is it something”, rather, it is a kind of chaotic movement of the eye, prompted by the desire to avoid the horror of the real. The semantic uncertainty of the strategy to look leaves us with the surface of the visible, for what we see while glancing through the places of things, persons, events are devoid of an internal structure, therefore not the Eye, but the Glance brings some certainty, orderliness,

constancy to the visible. Simulation of the reality reaches its limit in the genre puppet, which reproduces not only the functions of the character, but also the completeness of the context. Puppet as a formative function of the Ego recodes the content from the outside to the inside. It is noted that the puppet is quite unassuming in terms of clothing and functions, performs this task much better, precisely because in this case the imagination of the “person playing” is not restricted.

What is the difference between a marionette and a puppet? The puppet excessively embodies the internal, in its form, figure, it is excessively real in relation to the flight of the imaginary. The marionette thinks the world in lines, in intensities, vibrations, circles and zigzags. The exhibition of Paul Klee at the Museum of Fine Arts was called *No a Day Without a Line*. The marionette differs from the puppet because it is not a puppeteer’s hand, it replaces the connection of immediacy created by the human hand with a line on the canvas, i.e. translates body movement into the plane of the picture. In relation to the movement-immobility opposition the puppet and the doll occupy two almost extreme positions. The marionette is in

free movement, guided by the influence of multidirectional cosmic forces – earth, sky, peace, deities, mortals.

Heidegger, as it became apparent today after the loss of Thing, Name, Event, etc., believed that until this loss the subject used to be the center of cosmogony, whereas now he is only a marionette in the draft of being. If Dasein (the full subject) is able to conquer a crack, take one’s stand, gain a position, then the marionette is obsessed with just one movement. The marionette is able to imitate the dynamics of any forces of the world, any intensity. The painting by Paul Klee *With the Marionette* raises the question of the quality of the subject, the one being called the movement in the strategy of marionette. After all, it is clear that this is not a repeating rhythm (marionette is not musical), the chaos of any kind of movement – up, down, right, left, of indefinite intensity, completely private and unique, makes it being the subject of dispersion. The ability to extend the line – straight, curved, zigzag, in order to form some completeness, a certain whole is extremely problematic. Marionette is a total escape from form, figure, profile. What is the name of such strategy – body-without-organs, body-movement, cosmic flesh, dancing body,

grotesque corporeity, etc. Primary matter (cosmic flesh), which becomes energy, intensity, deceleration, and acceleration, paralyzes the ability of consciousness to become the one, the whole, the inner. The explanatory possibilities of the marionette body can be extended to cinema, capital, fashion, it is enough to refer to the ideas of Deleuze-Guattari from the book *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *The System of Fashion* by R. Barthes, etc. The random configuration of organs-bodies creates a distribution of intensities, directed not by movement from the periphery to the center, but the consciousness of scattering, fixing some meanings on the periphery of consciousness, reproduces consciousness-in-pieces. Consciousness is not able to form whatness, to become a figure, a person. "Time has gone astray," as Shakespeare observed. The collapse of being as a whole was almost documented by the aesthetics of the Russian avant-garde - Filonov, Malevich, Kandinsky, etc. The rhizome being, being-in-revolution, torn being, to Filonov, centers, collects only the signature under the picture - *The Formula of Revolution*, this parasitic addition indicates only the fear of decay. Artists of the beginning of the 20th

century and a little further guessed the catastrophe of life: being disintegrated, and then its parts connected together haphazardly. If the creators of the avant-garde experienced fear of loss of the reality, dizziness from the senselessness of what is happening, then the modern consciousness of man-in-the picture learned to experience pleasure and enjoyment of decay. The rhizome-marionette negates the Name of the father (tradition), Symbol, Thing, God, consciousness slips into a partial mimesis, imitates not the reality of forms (Platonism has exhausted its creative possibilities), but slips into the multiplicity of pluralities (A. Badiou), into a total difference (G. Deleuze). Take, for example, the image-thought of A. Tarkovsky from the film *Solaris*. Thinking Cosmos, reflecting the discomfort of astronauts due to the loss of reality, is trying to assemble something solid, a kind of person from pieces of the imaginary, and experiences defeat - the assembly was wrong, the result turns out to be some freaks, dwarfs, subhumans. Only the main character has a very decent copy, but also because it is constituted by a total sense of love. It seems that partial affects - fear, anger, despair, etc., are destructive,

according to Spinoza, and therefore they cannot constitute human-sizedness, God-likeness fails. Sometimes one wonders how a modern person tries to construct a deity from anything – Buddha, Christ, Devil, Angels, mermaids, from Tao, Yang and Yin, Muhammad, sorcerers and gobbies, etc. from Zarathustra. This monstrous creature places itself on the surface of all religious meanings, it scares itself and scares others, because the malaise from the absence of the whole, dizziness from flickering and mixing everything with everything that the Internet offers in abundance, obviously means a failure of self-identification of the “mirror stage”. Marionette is not the mirror in which one can recognize oneself.

Two arts of the epoch of technical reproducibility – photography and cinema – make it possible to understand how the “mirror stage” continues to function, disengaging from archaic masks, puppets, etc.

We are not interested in photography as a sign and means of its interpretation; this work was done by R. Barthes in his book *Camera lucida* [2]. Also, one should not fall for the errors of everyday consciousness, inclined to perceive the image as an instance

imitating life itself, although some meaning can be drawn from this assumption. Photo is a reproduction of what it was just like that, it indicates the presence that is always in the past. Photography is the reality of being in the past. When a photo is taken, the present is cancelled, therefore the photograph refers you to the reality with all certainty, but so that neither the present nor the future can be attributed to it.

It is readily apparent that the photo attempts to collect in one shot those pieces of the imaginary that form the flush of images: I am the one who was just that, I am the one the photographer sees me, I am the one effected by time, epoch, I’m the one who wants to cancel myself (I looked like that then, now I’m different), I am the way others want to see me (from this point of view, prison photos are very interesting, the photo of Mandelstam from the cover of the criminal case has stuck in my memory for a long time) and so on ... A single photo is always overloaded with meanings, it is necessary to capture everything in one picture-taking moment, the imagery makes the interpretation extremely complex and ambiguous.

The subject asks: are the one in the photo and me the same thing? The following is noticed: nobody sees the whole photo of a person, in the unity of what we could call the wholeness of I, when trying to identify, the subject notices particulars (wardrobe malfunction, for example), insignificant details (a checked coat is off size) or something extravagant (handcuffs, etc.), therefore the image of the I captured during studying the photo is characterized by fragmentation, vagueness, instability. Repeated looking at the photograph can reduce the indisposition to the picture, more alienated and objectified meanings become salient on the photo – social characteristics of the epoch, everyday details, genre features (wedding photography, for example). The puppet also strives for the finish of the image of Self in replenishing the imaginary (genre puppet, profession puppet, puppet-gender, etc.), however, the player has certain levels of freedom: remodel clothes, change hairstyle and hair color, creates a scenery – mother puppet and utensils, etc. In such ways, the ideal I masters the dynamics necessary for the ego-subject. In the case of photography, the speed of the imaginary is minimal,

and, in essence, is exhausted by negation: I am not that version in the picture, I am the other. Photography, based on the factuality of the moment, confirms the identity with the fact that this was exactly so, then, in that place, at that moment in time. The disadvantage is that the reality is captured at the point of coincidence, and thus one system (real photo) is made dependent on another – the ideal I. The frustration of one system under the influence of another (I am not the version in the photo with the weapon the prisoner was shot) makes the self-perceiving person negate the reality. The subject does not have the courage to enter into the horror of the real, all that is left to do is to lose senses or commit suicide, of course, there are milder cases of distress at the picture. Consequently, photography is a very cruel way of identification of the ego-subject: you are the version you recognize in the photograph, a thick brunette is captured in the picture instead of a slender blonde. The imaginary experiences a terrible crisis: one system – the imaginary, is frustrated by the influence of another – the real. In the presence of photographs (the presence of the real depresses), the imaginary does not feel reassured. There are the methods of avoiding



unambiguity: turning a picture into a series until the variant the imaginary can agree with, or consider photo to be unsuccessful due to a defect in the technical means, bad light, a failure angle of shooting, etc. and thereby restore the imaginary. Which instance turns out to be stronger in the dispute between the real and the imaginary: of course, the imaginary, because the photo can be corrected or destroyed at all, nothing is done as easily as the denial of reality. Not only feminists do not like Lacan, but also all those who are not able to “call things by their proper names.” To accept the real is difficult, as well as to think, insists Lacan.

Cinema, let us add television to it, while documentary film can be attributed to photographing, is characterized by the speed of movement of images. A movie is created from a series of discrete characters that move at a certain speed – 24 frames per second. In the photograph, the subject does not disappear, it is fixed in the system of representation: I am the one represented in this picture, in the photo he finally finds the Other that he wants. Suppose, 80-100 photos of himself in a series of shots in one day, the subject achieves the correlation of the Self and the Other,

which provides a certain constancy, and therefore neurotic attempts at self-identification can be suspended. Of course, any crisis situation makes the subject again resorting to contact with the “real” (the photo is a sibling of the reality): I am the one who has been recently loved, and now abandoned or the one whose beloved is unfaithful. Konchalovsky used this technique of discrimination in his film *Romance for Lovers*, replacing the color film with black and white: the characters changed, moving from the euphorically romantic world to the everyday one. It can be said that the specular reflection of photography reproduces a mono-logical subject, familiar to the West European theater, novel, portraiture, as well as masks and puppets.

Cinema offers the subject a different mirror: it immerses the pre-subject in psychotic, schizoid discourses, in conflicting meanings, in the polyphony of voices that do not hear each other. Not every movie made this breakthrough to an identity of a completely different order – to a split subject, not connected either to itself or to other, but staying between madness and normality. Being-between-ego-and-others distorts the speech of the

characters, the imaginary, etc. We mean, exclusively an art house in the version of Lars von Trier, Jean Luc Godard (the most revealing film of this kind is *Socialism*), *Psycho* by A. Hitchcock and others. We cannot offer a complete list of such films, because Russian humanities do not have a theoretical apparatus to learn how to watch and teach how to watch such films, that is, to distinguish one from the other. We need to borrow concepts from Deleuze, Kristeva, Lacan and others. Rather, we will achieve the result if we try to show how this kind of discourse works on the material of one of Lars von Trier's films *The House That Jack Built*. The reaction of ordinary people to this movie is: How to watch the film about a sadistic killer to the end and not become deranged, given its temporal dimension: it lasts 2 hours and 20 minutes.

In the classic cinema shot in the style of Stanislavsky, the image (the signified) and the character (the signifier) coincide: the heroine cries and utters the remarks through tears, the real adjoins this: she is upset, unhappy, etc. In this case, the real, the imaginary and the symbolic confirm each other. In modern cinema, the signifier (the character's words) and the signified (the

willing I) do not coincide with each other, only the signifier, superficial speech, is salient, it just sounds convincing and reasonable. How competently a maniac killer embeds a policeman in the "rationality" of his message, offering a variant of a family quarrel. He does not lie in the literal sense of the word: quarrel with his mistress within the framework of the discourse supported by the imaginary could be in reality. The speech of the imaginary, i.e. the psychopath's discourse, can be quite logical, convincing, supported by the stereotypical thinking of the Other (the policeman): excessive drinking leads to family quarrels. A policeman trusts a literal message, events line up in a causal relationship familiar to him: alcohol, quarrel, screaming, fight. The passage to the real is closed because the imaginary killer gives the incident a logically consistent similitude. This type of perception stereotype is adjoined by the conversation of a social inspector (the psychopath's discourse is masked, hidden) with a woman who draws a pension after the loss of her husband. Ordinary consciousness needs meaningfulness, it ceases to suspect or be frightened if fragments of speech line

up in a chain of sequences of an intelligible nature. This stereotypical perception of everyday consciousness should not surprise: people usually think just like that, connecting superficial signifiers in a chain: an employee's suit, a parked car, a briefcase, paper on an official letterhead, the image of a government official. This literal, simple, poor perception ensures sustainability and stability of the life world, saves thinking: makes connecting hermeneutics of suspicion unnecessary. We could not endure this life if we constantly switched the signs of everyday life, the imaginary which dreams ... into a different register - into the real one: we like to watch detectives just because murderers and rapists are always there, somewhere, in another world, not thereabout. It is impossible to come into the horror of the real. A woman who imprudently takes a ride from a stranger, having snatched a glance at a car jack conveniently at the hand of a murderer, could be wary and attempt to escape, obediently becomes the first victim of a psychopath. Why? The spectrum of the signifiers that the rapist attaches to her does not allow her to notice the inconsistency in the signs, it is necessary to conquer the crack in the

signifiers and go to the meaning of the real. We are to learn to ideate negativity, affect – to jump out.

Let us give thought to how the killer discards the real (he can't help but understand that one mustn't kill, as he washes his bloodied hands under the tap). He shifts himself (partly, us as well) to another register: from the real to the imaginary. He concentrates his perception on the experience of red: red dress, victim's blood, red victim's baseball caps, killer's red baseball cap – pictures of old master flicker, a reference to Dante, etc. The maniac's imaginary attaches the symbolic (red means brutality, ordeals of the boundaries of life and death, etc.) to this system of red, he connects the images of red from the artists of Renaissance), which allows him to see the Artist in himself. The I-viewer is seduced at some point: he no longer sees the killer maniac but sees the artist. The non-linear nature of the meaning of the imaginary allows the consciousness to choose some elements of the visible that the imaginary readily provides (the elements of red) and to neglect others (but what about the fact that the boy had to be killed twice). The psychopath's discourse is no less intricate than the speech of an ordinary

person. Literal, simple perception requires relying on the real, accepting reality, followed by confession of guilt, repentance, pangs of conscience, etc. Refocus from the real on the imaginary: stacked corpses become the house, the walls of a shelter-dwelling, and the care of the killer-maniac consists in what worthless these people will appear before the eyes of God. The rest is: we are not dealing with a serial killer, but with the artist, the Creator, along with God.

Perverse consciousness works in the strategy: not to want to know, to put off the real, to build a consistent system of signs: to build the House persistently (the House that Jack built is a noun for the killer) and thanks to this, continue to live.

What kind of mirror does the arthouse cinema provide us with: the Ego turns out to be able to try on masks of ambiguity and even polyphony, immerse oneself in images of dissoluteness (make a purse from a woman's skin, and hereinafter referred to as Trier), to participate in a festival of food and bowel movements, a disastrous laugh, in short, immerse oneself in the contemplation of one's own death (Zeferelli's film *Scoff*, or *The Cook*, the

*Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* directed by Greenway), more precisely, go through the labyrinth of this slow, ever slower dying. This is the action of modern avant-garde cinema that borrows its discourse from a psychopathic subject. Putting psychopathology on the aside (this is the subject of psychiatry), it can be assumed that movie, providing a mirror for the subject, is the result of the subject being fragmented, split, highly dynamized by the cinema speed of the frame, which impedes the attempts to collect the wholeness from the fragments of the I. The consolation is that movie is just a movie, like a stage in a theater, which is a guarantee of security for the subject.

#### **4.CONCLUSION.**

The preliminary conclusions that can be formulated are reduced to the following conclusions:

- visual images should be considered as the procedures of subjectivation, as the ways of constituting the consciousness of the ego-subject, which make up for the lack of subjectivity;

- visual images should be considered as visual bodies (masks, puppets, photographs, fashion, etc.) that

remain empty forms if there are no Those who look. Another visualization captures, seduces, terrorizes those who Looks. The visual image sticks to the one who looks, becomes one's hostage, the one who is being manipulated;

- a desire in the Eye of the Other remains inferior, an empty form, a dialogue with the subject is necessary for the picture to have meaning.

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