Looking for the Gaze: The Case of Humiliation in the Digital Era

İnternet Çağında Aşağılama

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Abstract

The internet constitutes a virtual "place" for sociability. It is a platform for interactions based on reciprocal and dialectic exchange between "being seen by others" and "seeing others". As new technologies emerge, ways of viewing are revised: The main innovation of the internet has been, in ordinary life as in the media, seeing, hearing and showing everything with the individual at the center of permanent interactions established in a virtual world that makes it unseen by the naked eye. But visibility is a trap: In attempting to a part of the virtual world through self-exposition, individuals expose themselves to potential sources of humiliation. This article will explore how the internet has redefined individuals' representations of self, while exposing them to the misappropriation of their image.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Gaze, Humiliation, Interactions, Internet, Self-presentation.

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Özet

Günümüzde internet, sosyal hayatımızda karşılıklı ilişkilerin kurulduğu bir ortam olmuştur. Ötekiler ile olan bu ilişki, kişinin kendisini dış dünyaya açarken, onları da aynı zamanda görebilme ortamı yaratmaktadır. Böylece, görsel yeni iletişimin, teknolojilerin ve özellikle de ekranlar aracılığı ile gelişmelerin, "bakma" ve "görme" alışkanlıklarımızı değiştirdiğini görmekteyiz. Bu çerçevede internetin getirdiği başlıca yeniliğin "herşeyi görebilme, söyleyebilme ve gösterebilme" olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Oysa bu görünürlürlük hali, kolayca bir tuzağa dönüşebilir. Kendini bu şekilde dış dünyaya görsel olarak açma hali, aynı zamanda diğer seyirci internet kullanıcılarının eleştirilerine ve hatta her türlü küçük düşürücü eylemlerine de neden olabilir. Günümüzde internet yolu ile küçük düşürme, yani cyberbullying kavramı, işte bu nedenle konuşulmaya başlanmıştır. Bu makalede esas olarak gösterilmek istenen, yeni teknolojilerin gelişmesine bağlı olarak insanların birbirleri ile olan ilişkilerindeki değişen davranış biçimleri ve bunun bir sonucu olarak kişilerin internet ortamlarındaki aşırı teşhir nedeni ile yaşadıkları sorunlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Bakış, Mobbing, İnternet, İlişki.*

The internet has been revolutionary in the lives of individuals: It has allowed for limitless access to the world and introduced new habits into households. Individuals can now communicate with peers, share videos or music, and even play with strangers, 24/7, from the comfort of their own homes.

This technological universe has even brought about a new understanding of knowledge, thanks to search engines or even to Wikipedia, people have an incredible quantity of information at their fingertips: As Bastard (Bastard, 2012) has shown, a Google search on "Lady Gaga" brings up 113 million results in 0.22 seconds. This new approach to knowledge relies on this tool's technical capacity to store information: Considered as the "world's open library," the internet retains in "its memory" all sorts of data, even the most compromising. This interface has allowed everyone, and especially the least daring, to express themselves (on forums, in chat rooms), to worship (their idyll via Fan'art), to create (their own blogs, for example), but also to protest, to join forces, to get angry[1]. Information and communications technologies are not only about socialization; they are also "tools for action."

The internet constitutes a virtual "place" for sociability. It is a platform for interactions: It means being in touch with the world and with others. Moreover, it has become necessary to "live" in that world in order to be "truly alive": If you are not *viewed*, you are among the *invisible*. This relation to others is based on reciprocal and dialectic exchange between "being seen by others" and "seeing others." (Sartre, 2003)

As new technologies emerge, ways of viewing are revised, especially through screens: Though it has facilitated communication, access to information and has made it possible to store a large quantity of data, the main innovation of the internet has been, in ordinary life as in the media, "seeing, hearing and showing everything" (Uhl, 2002) with the individual at the center of permanent interactions established in a virtual world that makes it unseen by the naked eye. On the internet,

1 We can see this in the demonstrations led by groups such as the "Indignés," "Occupy Wall Street" and "Anonymous."

identity is not determined by individuals' physical identity; instead, *they are as they are represented.* In order to be sure to be "viewed" by others on the internet, and "stay in view" individuals must "go over the top", staying in sight by being "out of sight", generating a lot of hype so that others will not pass them by.

For these reasons, many internet users are eager to stand naked and unveil intimate parts of their lives, as if such exposure will allow them to be more "grounded" in the digital world. In this world, presentations of the self are no longer based on a private-public distinction. Traditional limits are deconstructed through general and repeated use of the internet. **The intimate and the public** tend to coexist, to be juxtaposed. We can see this in devices such as webcams, and the habit of posting personal images, encouraging individuals to divulge their private lives. Individuals exhibit themselves, accept to stand naked and in return they can be seen. This relation between "voyeurism" and "exhibitionism" questions the secret described by Simmel (Simmel, 1991) as a form of respectable sociability: Transgression, which means visibility, is the norm in modern society. We break the boundaries of intimacy and of secrets. Nothing is better than revealing yourself.

With the consent of individuals in search of recognition, this overexposure allows them to be permanently aligned with alterity, to be constantly "in touch" with the other (as shown by the expression "keep in touch"). The emergence of sites like Twitter, Facebook or even Msn encourages individuals' desire to be "viewable" by all: The constant posting of photographs and commentaries made possible by such sites gives social networkers a feeling of ubiquity. Identity is multiplied: They live both in the real world and the virtual world. Relations with others is counted in terms of "networks" proving the degree of groundedness a user has in virtual social links; this is why every social networker asks the same main question: What is my place on the Web? Today, it is mainly through projectors that individuals may obtain the social recognition that they seek. Existence on the internet means existence in the eyes of the other, constantly and in the most intimate detail.

However, as Foucault put it, *visibility is [also] a trap* (Foucault, 1991): *full light distorts more than darkness*. On the internet, individuals

accept to submit to others' "views" and comments; they bend to the diktats and tyrannies of opinion that make and remake both reputation and e-reputation. Through this, they attempt to be seen, recognized and even, in digital terms to be "liked". In attempting to be as much a part of the real world as the virtual world through self-exposition, individuals expose themselves to constant judgment, and particularly to potential sources of humiliation.

This is particularly the case in the usurpation of identity in order to tarnish someone's reputation: The self-image that individuals wish to portray gets out of their hands and is taken over by others. This process seems to be on the rise: Creating an unflattering false profile in another's name, posting photos or modified images revealing intimacy (sometimes even complied from other sources), these postings in the victim's name pointing to indecent behaviors[2] are sources of humiliation aiming to discredit the person represented. New terms are emerging to talk about this phenomenon: "cyberbullying", "cyberharassment", "cyberintimidation" or even "cyberhumiliation."

According to the annual cyberbullying report published by Ditch the Label[3] in 2014, on 10.000 interviewed youths in United Kingdom, 7 in 10 are victims of cyberbullying; 37% of them are experiencing cyberhumiliation on a highly frequent basis and 20% are experiencing extreme cyberbullying on a daily basis. In total, an estimated 5.43 million young people in the United Kingdom have experienced cyberbullying.

The direct relation between cyberhumiliation and the over self-exposure can not be doubt: According to the report cited above, the users of sites such as Myspace and Facebook, namely networks in which individuals can expose themselves to others and can be seen by them, are those who experienced the most cyberbullying.

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2 An adolescent filmed himself mistreating his pet, an old woman threw her cat in a garbage bin, a young woman in Japan threw her gum on the ground; all of their names and videos were criticized online and they were subjected to real-life consequences. Employees have been fired following online portrayals of them drunk during parties, and this has appeared in newspapers.

3 Ditch the Label's report on cyberbullying: http://www.ditchthelabel.org/research/index.php/329176/lang/en

CYBERBULLYING AND SOCIAL NETWORKS
Survey of over 10.000 young people

SOCIAL NETWORKS' NAME	SOCIAL NETWORKS USERS' PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF USERS WHO HAS EXPERIENCED CYBERBULLYING
FACEBOOK	75%	54%
YOUTUBE	66%	21%
TWITTER	43%	28%
ASK.FM	36%	26%
INSTAGRAM	24%	24%
BEBO	19%	14%
TUMBLR	24%	22%
MYSPACE	4%	89%

Source: Annual Cyberbullying Report of Ditch the Label - 2014

While fostering self-exposure to the gaze of all, virtual space has also become a platform for "plotting the death" of reputation, and for collective fury. The cyber-humiliation can cause psychological symptoms in victim such as depression, anxiety, stomach aches and headaches; it found to have catastrophic effects upon self-esteem and social lives but can also lead to extreme behaviors such as suicide (Hertz, Donato and Wright, 2013; Hinduja and Patchin, 2010), phenomenon designated by the term *cyberbullicide* (Hinduja and Patchin, 2009).

This article will explore how the internet has redefined individuals' representations and performances of self, while exposing them to the risks of humiliation and the misappropriation of their image[4].

4 Some aspects of this research have been discussed in the following articles: Dilmaç, Julie Alev, "If looks could kill… The case of humiliation in digital Era", European Journal of Research on Education; Dilmaç, Julie Alev, "Représentatiton et mise en

The attempt here is to review briefly the literature and to analyze the recent theoretical approaches about this topic. Various cases related to cyber humiliation are discussed to propose a new understanding of this contemporary phenomenon which affects the society. I would attempt in this research to give an accurate description of cyberbullying and to show that this practice has to be analyzed through the spectrum of relations between the victim *and* the aggressor, and not only through the aspect of the offence. The aim of this analysis is to show that cyberhumiliation is a consequence of the overexposure of individuals in the Digital World, namely when one *offer* oneself to others' gaze. That is why, for me, to understand this practice of intimidation we should first focus our attention on individuals' desire to be "viewable" by all.

Staging the Self

A European survey (Livingstone, 2011) reported that 50% of youths aged 9–16 years declared that *it's easier to be yourself on the internet than in real life* (Livingston, 2011: 41). Other studies have confirmed this idea, showing that internet users open their hearts more easily online than when face to face. (Boeton, 2013: 35; Pasquier, 2011).

These statements are not surprising since individuals on the internet are simply not themselves: They "are their self-representations".

Through their avatars, individuals model the self-images they wish to expose to others. They show what they want others to believe they are. They can decide to be themselves or better than themselves, close to the "Ideal Self" (Freud, 2012 [1914]); the person they would rather be (a hero, a fan, a disciple, another name, take on someone else's name...) or may even decide "not to be" or "to be not" (the choice of an anonymous profile, for example).

In the virtual world, people invent new lives, a digital history (Lalo, 2012: 27); and may also fabricate the image of their virtual bodies. Hair color, skin color, sex and clothing... Internet users have

scène de soi sur Internet : le cas de la cyberhumilation", Cahiers Interdiciplinaires de la Recherche en Communication AudioVisuelle (will be published in Fall 2014).

infinite choices in modeling their "second skin" (Lalo, 2012: 27). They become their own masters of representation. They construct a digital identity (Boeton, 2013: 34), a virtual self, a sort of double. They choose and create a representative (Gozlan and Masson, 2013: 474) to better try themselves out, to self-modulate, self-explain, but also to expose themselves in others' eyes through the screen.

The user's digital self (Lalo, 2012: 26) allows for *seeing oneself* evolve in the virtual world while trying to be *seen* by others. Individual can even count (and visualize) the number of views, know how many *viewers* have set their eyes on their messages, on their profiles. Cybersociability and internet self-performance rely on "calculated communication" where views of "followers" are evaluated, made profitable. Facebook is another probing example: Users can expose their relational capital in displaying a list of friends (on average, 120). As Fanny affirms, individuals define themselves through the social and cash in on the social: They consume (homo consumans) and add up (homo consummans) sociability on the friend-counter, the published and received commentaries (Fanny, 2012:142).

This counting signals the "popularity quotient" of the individual. If our posts are neither "followed" nor commented or shared, it means we are invisible in others' eyes. This feeling is all the more unbearable in a world where any *connection* with others is established by views. In this situation, individuals become aware that they may disappear without trace in the memory of anyone: Their lives will never have had any meaning for others (Enriquez, 2006: 40).

On the internet, we are constructed by others' view, constructing us, making our *e-reputation.* This is what confirms our existance and makes us someone who deserves to be seen, someone who is "worth a view". As Béliard has stated, it is the number of messages posted that forum members acquire that determines moving up the ranks within the forum (Béliard, 2009). Reputation tends to take on a specific definition: To "have a good reputation" in the virtual world, it is not enough to be an individual who is praised by others for irreproachable ethics; to build an e-reputation, you need to be the most seen and the most viewed, for whatever reason. "Cybersociability" seems to imply

other codes of logic and communication than in the real world (Boeton, 2013: 35).

To be seen on the truly democratic platform of the virtual world, individuals must double their effort: Performance and presentation must stand out, they must go beyond the ordinary, or even be spectacular, "eye-catching": Subjectivity must be publicized and refined with an original approach. Today *to be yourself, you can* [no longer] *follow the crowd* (Dubet, 1991). You need to go "beyond the masses". Various strategies are employed to attract attention: Liven up the page with banners, special effects or animated images, choose an attractive username that will act as your "sales representative" (Fanny, 2012: 143) so that others look at you, take part in conversations, post opinions on your webpages, fuel debates, post photos, invite friends to contribute to and converse on your blogs… All means of affirming presence and attracting attention that is views. Individuals attempt to "leave traces of themselves" (Lalo, 2012: 24) and especially to stay in the "flow" of constant communication.

To stay in sight, individuals do not hesitate to expose and exhibit themselves in all their intimacy. The quest to be seen is a necessary part of individual existence and recognition.

This self-exhibition sought by individuals has been made possible by new technological applications: The snapchat makes it possible to share photos or videos that are particularly ephemeral; the sender can choose how many seconds (between 1 and 10) the receiver can view the image. Once seen, the image will self-destruct. The receivers must seize in a flash the image that the other strikes them with.

Overexposure in the digital world is all the more significant in that it even concerns virtual "walls": The wall is no longer a boundary separating individuals or hiding them from others; it is now a place to exhibit and offer oneself to others' gaze through sharing documents, images or commentaries. In digital networks, the "writing on the wall" unveils subjectivity and contributes to a "*certain staging of the self*" (Dagnaud, 2013: 32). It no longer serves to hide the most intimate life details or even the body behind a structure, but to expose them to the view of spectators.

To be viewed, the wall must be transparent, making the most intimate parts of our existence transpire. It must jump out at you. On the internet, the wall is no longer a boundary separating us from others, but rather an interface that links us and puts us in touch. However, in handing themselves over to the gaze of alterity, individuals accept to submit to avidity, to the "thirst" for this gaze: They aspire to be "commented," "shared," "liked," since it is *others' gaze that brings you to light.*

A Consequence of Self-overexposure: The Cyberhumiliation

In attempting to attain social recognition through the overexposure of their existence in the eyes of others, individuals inevitably submit to the "tyranny of opinion" on which reputation depends: The conformity of their behaviors to norms defined by the digital world gives them social recognition; thus to exist in others' eyes, to feel that you exist, you need to be present, known, even famous, through image. Yet even if such viewing does mean recognition, it also paves the way for judgement and discredit. The tyranny of opinion is all the stronger in the virtual world since it is composed of anonymous, untouchable alterities which can nonetheless place judgement on our actions. What could be more humiliating than seeing that some unknown person has posted a commentary discrediting us and criticizing our behaviors and actions at the bottom of one of our own webpages?

Humiliation, like *cyberhumiliation*, signifies **degradation of a person or group**, in a process of subjugation that damages or destroys pride, honor or dignity. To be humiliated signifies being placed against one's will and often deeply hurtfully in a position markedly inferior to what individuals think they deserve. Humiliation corresponds to *a specific situation in which an individual or a group is faced with an unequal relation with someone who exercises control and the other person who is subject to this control* (Ansart, 2006, 132). Humiliation is a process in which the victim has no means of responding to the attack, and must passively endure it. This passivity is all the stronger when humiliation is formulated on the internet: In the case of someone taking over their identity or exposing a compromising image in their name, the victim can neither make a comeback nor even know the identity of the aggressor.

Means for diffamation appear to be on the rise in today's virtual interactions; as shown in a recent Microsoft study within Europe: Almost one third of the 21.765 European teens questioned reported that they had already been victims of intimidation on the internet. They are particularly aware of the dangers of this phenomenon: 71% state that it is much easier to humiliate someone on the web. In England and in Italy, respectively 56% and 23% think that the web encourages this behavior.[5] The data collected by legal experts Slater and Gordon and the Anti-Bullying alliance underscores the same idea: The results show that over half of children and young people in England (55.2%) accept cyberbullying as part of everyday life[6].

According to the Internet Rights Observatory[7], among 20.000 European youths, one out of three young people state that they have been victims of cyberharassment; while one-fifth, namely around 21.2%, affirm they bullied another.

Cyberharassment has five main characteristics[8]:

1- Intentional aggressive behaviour: the will of hurting the feelings and/or the health;

2- Repetitive attacks on a victim;

3- An imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim;

4- The harassment can take place both on the Internet and in the real life;

5- The attacks are oriented towards a particular person.

It would seem, as Tisseron has affirmed, that any empathetic

5 Le Matin. CH, February 21, 2009 (Young people in Switzerland face more harassment than elsewhere in Europe).

6 http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/press-centre/new-survey-finds-parents-and-teachers-struggle-to-keep-kids-safe-online.aspx

7 http://www.internet-observatory.be/internet_observatory/pdf/brochures/Boek_cyberpesten_fr.pdf

8 http://www.internet-observatory.be/internet_observatory/pdf/brochures/Boek_cyberpesten_fr.pdf

relation established in the body is impossible in the virtual world (Tisseron, 2011). Interactions between internet users can only be established based on viewing and judgment by an exchange of self-images that reduce the individual to a reified body, devoid of any inner resource.

Nonetheless; if individuals align with this tyranny of opinion, it is because it allows reciprocity: They can also judge others. Through this, individuals construct themselves and situate themselves in the world, imposing themselves on other members. They actively participate in webs of sociability. Judgement established on the internet can only respond to rules specific to the virtual world: Since existance in the virtual world means existance in the eyes of others through our "avatar", a misappropriated or defamed image will have a considerable impact on the destruction of our "e-reputation". No longer pointing to an individual body, but attempting to tarnish the reflection of a reified image using its reproduction, the attack can only induce a process similar to a symbolic death; since it attempts to reach an identity devoid of interiority. This death sentence of e-reputation through anonymous judgement cannot be followed up by an reply, and thus is a form of humiliation and degradation. Through this, aggressors possess their victims, who are reduced to silence, while forcing them to look at their own humiliated images.

Multiple forms of humiliation can be seen in the virtual world: In some cases, individuals **have not consented to appear** on the web and nonetheless appear against their will on networks they have not chosen. It is the case of Amanda Todd[9], a Canadian teenager, who met a stranger on internet. After a year of conversations, the man convinced her to bare her breasts. Later, the individual contacted her on Facebook, threatening to send around the picture to her friends unless "she gave him a show". Although the family of Amanda has decided to move to a new home, the man found her and created a Facebook profile in her name, using her uncensored photo as his profile picture. This situation led to physically assaults and bullying by others, provoking Todd's suicide. Here, the aggressor expresses himself in the name of his

9 www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/11/amanda-todd-suicide-bullying_n_1959909.html

victim, becoming her voice. The image of the victim is disseminated by the other in order to stigmatize it.

This is also the case with **"false profiles"** created without the consent of the cyberbullied persons: Others stand in for them, "pirating" their identity, rewriting their personal story. The case of an Illinois teenager identified as "John Doe[10]" can illustrate this situation: The teenager was bullied by four of his classmates who created a fake Facebook profile in his name, representing him as a sexually obscene racist, falsely identifying him as being homosexual and amassing hundreds of "friends" as if he were running the profile himself. The aggressors used real photos of him and posted his real contact information. As a result, Doe suffered "severe emotional distress" and his family decided to take legal action because of the damage the false profile has done to the teen's reputation and his future.

Revealing images and personal information in the name of a third party also implies imposed humiliation: Sharing photos or intimate videos filmed without the person knowing in which their private lives are exposed (Haroche, 2006: 32) has become common practice in the digital era. The case of 17-year-old Rehtaeh Parsons, who hung herself after a video of sexual violence against her was posted online, is one of many examples of cyberhumiliation. The case of Tyler Clementi[11] is also a relevant example of this situation: After asking his roommate to give him some time alone in the room they shared, Clementi invited a male friend to stay in his room. His roommate, Dharun Ravi, used a webcam to view, without his knowledge, Clementi kissing his friend. Then, Ravi posted a message to his 150 followers on Twitter, disclosing Clementi's homosexuality. As a result, Clementi, who could not stand this humiliation, committed suicide by jumping from a bridge.

Another form of humiliation in the virtual world is the **psychological harassment** (Hirigoyen, 2004): Victims discover that they are "offered" for others to contemplate the spectacle of their

10 http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/AheadoftheCurve/teens-sued-fake-facebook-profile/ story?id=8702282

11 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/30/tyler-clementi-gay-student-suicide

distress, their humiliation. "Amandine du 38"[12], a French teen, has experienced this form of attack: After posting a video singing a rap song written by herself, she became the target of mockery, insults and death threat on the web. Victims of psychological cyberharassment can witness their own humiliation and at the same time be devoured by other internet users' viewings, with their opportunities to applaud, comment, or encourage the violence. The victim's humiliation is greatly increased.

At another extreme, having one's **profile erased**[13] is yet another form of humiliation: Imagine suddenly noticing that you "no longer exist" and have disappeared from the network, to everyone's indifference, in a society where recognition essentially means being viewed. In this case, the disappearance of your image means an unbearable invisibility. You can no longer be seen. This inattention can signify ignorant, scornful indifference, or even denial of the individual as a human being (Ellison, 1991). In these situations, individuals **lose control of their image**: Whether it is determined by an exterior force, divulged to the world or totally ignored, the individual is subject to situations of violence established through viewing, a form of humiliation reinforced by the incertitude of what will happen to the images.

The case of the Abu Ghraib Prison is a probing example: The photographic exposition of imprisoned soldiers half-naked, displayed like trophies to public viewing, was the pinnacle of humiliation through image. Reified both by their "pose" as humiliated and by their photographic representation, individuals are "delivered" (and no longer seen) to the eyes of anonymous internet users. Their reification is determined by an exterior aspect that has been imposed on them. The sharing of the latest images of Muammar al-Gaddafi during his capture

12 It is possible to read some comments such as "go hang yourself" or "kill yourself" below the video posted by the victim. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5IWEUv5ojE

13 A notable case is Justin Bieber, all of whose videos on Youtube were removed. http://www.public.fr/News/Justin-Bieber-un-hacker-le-fait-disparaitre-d-Internet-103259
Or even that of Nabilla, Reality TV celebrity, who after gaining much media recognition had her Wikipedia page erased from the Internet. http://www.legorafi.fr/2013/04/30/apres-nabilla-wikipedia-menace-de-retirer-les-pages-de-dave-mickael-vendetta-woodkid-et-frederic-lefebvre/

is of the same order. Anonymous people also do not escape from these forms of humiliation: Happy-slapping, which consists of posting online images of violent acts taken with a cell phone, is widespread and seems to be becoming generally accepted.

Today's individuals are confronted with "cannibalism of the eye" (Thomas, 1984: 136), the devouring of their image without grasping any depth. The image is only taken to the first degree; the individual represented can only appear in a reified form. In addition, being shared by a large and anonymous community, this humiliating image is reproduced on a wide scale, similar to the technique of mechanized reproducibility of a work of art (Benjamin, 1991) and tends to lose its "aura": The situation of humiliation displayed in the photograph is transformed into a simple shared image, devoid of its unique and specific history.

The inner self has no place, and is replaced by an image that, by definition, cannot reflect any personal depth. The avatar, the profile, the last name, the photograph are reflection in the public virtual space.

Reputation, defined by its link to consideration based on specific characteristics of the individual, has no place in this situation. Even the "aura" of the individual, personality and authenticity, is emptied of substance, becoming only a reflection: We can then speak of *e-reputation* which must be maintained and protected.

What is troubling in today's world is that people tend to confuse the simulacra of self-represented by the internet image with the reality. In the past, images were a reflection of the world. Today, they create the world (Belhomme, 2010: 42). Disapproval on the internet is like a violent symbolic death that can have consequences on real reputation. The assaults can take solid shape through the "shame page" proving that the virtual world evolves concomitantly with real society. Thus, the image begins to contaminate reality and to shape it; it does not conform to the real except to better deform it; moreoever: It subtilises reality for its own benefit, jumping to conclusions before reality has the time to produce itself as such. (Baudrillard, 1987: 140-141) Individuals who witness the degradation of their e-reputations will most likely experience real-world consequences. A notable example is Jessica

Leonhardt[14], better known by the name of "Jessi Slaughter" who was the victim of an entire viral phenomenon, after having posted several videos online. She was insulted and victim of anonymous phonecalls and pizza deliveries; the harassment went as far as posting prostitution advertizements mentioning her home address.

Victims of cyberhumiliation have no way to get back: The recognition they seek is denied, and no opportunity is given to defend themselves. These situation forces victims to accept the posture of humiliated, the "loss of face" (Goffman, 1990): Their own self-image and that which is exposed to others are completely at odds. This fact can explain why some victims, who could no longer stand the humiliation, have committed suicide.

Conclusion

Violent behaviors aiming at discrediting others are facilitated by new technologies and are defined by an absence of regulations. Though it is possible to tarnish the image of an individual in real life, the legal system is supposed to serve the purpose of repairing the harm done; this is much more difficult in the virtual world. Authorities attempt to provide some solutions: websites mentioning the problem of cyberhumiliation and its consequences tend to develop[15]. Authorities campaigned also hard for a safer use of the internet. An increasing number of websites are created for preventing cyberbullying: their aim is to provide useful information about cyberharassment for victims but also for parents of teens, who represent the most bullied population.

However, these aim to promote an ethical use of the internet in order to respect individual freedoms, rather than applying effective punishment against cyberhumiliation. This no doubt explains the rise of sites such as Rudysom[16] which offer services aiming to "clean" the damage done against e-reputation. The site's slogan for this service is *"Do not settle for following it… Master your e-reputation."* Their

14 http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/jessi-slaughter

15 http://www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying; www.stopcyberbullying.org; www.wiredsafety.com; www.stopbullyingnow.com are some of them.

16 http://www.rudysom.com/ also see http://www.reputationsquad.com/

premise reflects individuals' confusion when faced with humiliating prospects, and especially their loss of control with regards to their own image. These paid services indicate the rise of an "image market" in which reputation is negotiated, exchanged or destroys itself. On the internet, viewing is not an attribute, a duty and a right recognized for every subject and considered as the subject's property (Haroche, 2008: 170). It exists beyond individuals; it is imposed on them and judges them. Individuals become spectators of their "profile", of an imagined representation of their body. They are both themselves, concrete and real, but also their "avatar", simulacra that usurps their identity.

The attempt of this research was to point out the relation between the overexposure of individuals in the digital world and the cyberhumiliation. The aim was to prove that the self-exhibition and the constantly (and in the most intimate detail) sharing of personal information through the social networks could increase the chance of being bullied. As a result, it seems that to understand cyberhumiliation, we should not only focus on the offender's conduct or on victim's reaction; we should try to understand the constant individuals' desire of being "viewable" to everyone in the digital world. It represents the key to understanding cyberbullying.

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