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## (Self)-Perception of Young People's Identity in "The Face" by Szymon Kołoda

**Key words:** young people's identity, *homo eligens*, education, cyberspace, masculinity, patriotism

**Abstract:** The author, taking into account popular and scientific discourse about the "liquid" and "globalised" identity (viewed in the context of various social and family roles), attempts to reconstruct the image of a contemporary teenager's identity by referring to "The Face", a 2-minute film impression by seventeen-year-old Szymon Kołoda. The author uses the film as a basis to show areas of participation of contemporary young people, who balance between two realities: the real and the virtual one. The author supports her reasoning with the concept of hybrid identity by Zygmunt Bauman and the global teenager/ culture of diffusion by Zbyszko Melosik. The aim of the article is to make a subjective, socio-psychological interpretation of identity creations presented in Szymon Kołoda's picture, rather than a psychological diagnosis of the teenage actor's "inner integrity".

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Szymon Kołoda's film, entitled "The Face", won the campaign contest "Oglądam, czuję, myślę – młodzi w kinie" ("See, Feel and Think: Young People in Film-Making"), organised by New Horizons of Film Education and the Polish Film Institute; Szymon Kołoda is seventeen-years' old and he is a student at General High School No. 4 in Żary, Poland. The two-minute film impression presents various roles/ social activities "experienced" and "re-enacted" by the young director, thus creating a highly heterogeneous identity image of a modern teenager. Numerous

“creations” include: a naked torso of a young man, a pupil, a fan of a rock band, a computer-game player, a businessman, a soldier, a teenager holding a telephone conversation, a shaving man and a sports fan. “The Face” was selected out of over 40 films submitted to the contest. Szymon says: “I have been wondering for a long time: ‘who am I?’ and ‘where am I heading to?’ I decided to show my various embodiments by imposing one frame on the other. In spite of the fact that I only had an ordinary camera at my disposal, I managed to get the effect that I wanted.”<sup>1</sup>

In the times of “liquid identity”<sup>2</sup> it is harder to capture – also on the grounds of developmental psychology – the specific character of the “identity’s merry-go-round”, on which a contemporary teenager “is whirling.” Social and cultural changes, including globalisation processes, have turned into a specific “tsunami of stimuli”, which has redefined the traditional outlook on a coherent and conscious self-awareness in both inner and outer world<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the currently observable “state of cultural discontinuity” leads, in consequence, to the “relativisation of individual social identities”, insensitive (at least in theory) to gender, social class or ethnicity.<sup>4</sup>

What is, therefore, Szymon Kołoda’s “The Face” or, more precisely, “The Faces”? Is it possible to examine them in the context of mature creations resulting from a conscious obligation preceded by intense exploration (achieved identity)? Alternatively, they may be changing concepts of the self, enriched by active searches, only leading to the discovery of the truth (moratorium identity). There is yet another option: they may simply be devoid of the element of exploration, temporary (because, in consequence, they appear as frustrating) obligations resulting from fascination with significant persons (mirror identity)<sup>5</sup>. The purpose of this text is not an attempt at providing answers to the questions above, thereby being an expression of a psychological diagnosis of the level of “inner integrity”, but more

<sup>1</sup> Wygrało “Oblicze” Szymona Kołody!!!, <http://ogladamczujemyśle.blogspot.com/>, [access: 20.04.2015].

<sup>2</sup> Z. Bauman, *Tożsamość. Rozmowy z Benedetto Vecchim*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2007, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> T. Paleczny, *Socjologia tożsamości*, Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM Krakowskie Towarzystwo Edukacyjne, Kraków 2008, p. 133-134.

<sup>4</sup> E. Ogrodzka-Mazur, *(Nie)obecność patriotyzmu w świadomości aksjologicznej młodego pokolenia Polaków. “Przesuwanie się horyzontu aksjologicznego” czy kryzys w wartościowaniu?*, [in:] *Patriotyzm i nacjonalizm. Ku jakiej tożsamości kulturowej?*, J. Nikitorowicz (ed.), Kraków 2015, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> M. Bardziejewska, *Okres dorastania. Jak rozpoznać potencjał nastolatków*, [in:] *Psychologiczne portrety człowieka. Praktyczna psychologia rozwojowa*, A. I. Brzezińska (ed.), Sopot 2013, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, p. 367-370.

a desire to perform a subjectively influenced socio-psychological interpretation of identity creations presented by the author.

Being aware of the complexity and conceptual ambiguity in defining the concept of identity, which may be analysed in a substitutional, psychical or socio-cultural dimension, the author is going to pursue her discussion in the "spirit of synthesis" of the above-listed categories, paying special attention to the third, socio-cultural aspect<sup>6</sup>. It is perceived as the "key determinant of the subjective dimension of reality (...) (which; author's note A.I) remains in a dialectic relation to the social world"<sup>7</sup>. In this place, it is worth mentioning a comprehensive definition of cultural identity of E. Zamojska, in which the researcher "equips" the individual with a package of reflexive selectiveness, assigning subjective causality in the process of (self)identification to it. In the researcher's opinion, cultural identity is a "relatively fixed structure of the individual's awareness, emerging as a result of the individual's subjective choices, which usually tends to be called the individual's self-concept. Its content derives from the outside, in this case from the specific systems of culture."<sup>8</sup>

Analysing the identities presented in the film in detail, the author's attention was, in particular, caught by one, astounding by the character's nudity. It becomes particularly clear at the beginning and at the end of the film. According to the author, its uniqueness consists in specifically designed structure of the creation as such, in which the author perceives certain oxymoron-like features, being emphasised in the form of "covered nudity." It has to be stressed that in this case, the attire should be perceived more in the symbolic than literal context. This attire assumes a body-adorning form (more precisely: the area of face and ears) of jewellery (piercing, which, *nota bene*, accompanies every one of the presented creations), which is probably aimed at providing the plain (not individualised) nudity with a more pronounced (individual) character. Reaching further, one may venture saying that this "procedure" is an excellent analogy with respect to the very process of identity formation, perceived in the context of striving to "search for the self"<sup>9</sup>, as well as discovery of own "exceptionality, individuality and separateness."<sup>10</sup> Such

<sup>6</sup> T. Paleczny, *Socjologia ...* op. cit., p. 20-23.

<sup>7</sup> A. Cybal-Michalska, *Tożsamość młodzieży w perspektywie globalnego świata. Studium socjopedagogiczne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2006, p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> E. Zamojska, *Kulturowa tożsamość młodzieży. Studium empiryczne. Z badań nad młodzieżą ze szkół średnich*, Wydawnictwo Edytor, Toruń 1998, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> A. Krauze-Sikorka, M. Klichowski, *Świat Digital Natives. Młodzież w poszukiwaniu siebie i innych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2013, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> A. Cybal-Michalska, *Tożsamość w ponowoczesności – przyczynek do refleksji na temat społecznej konstrukcji obrazu ciała*, [in:] *Przemiany seksualności w społeczeństwie współczesnym* Teoria

creation is thus perceived as a highly individualised fragment of the “identity tale.” Nevertheless, it seems that this is not the only context that may be perceived when interpreting its’ meaning. In the performed analysis, it is worth taking into account the perspective of the “background function”, which is performed by this character. The author will venture an assumption that the character’s “covered nudity” filtering each of the drifting identities, exemplifies the identity root<sup>11</sup>, the metaphor of relative permanence, which is mentioned both by Z. Melosik, as well as A. Giddens<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, Z. Bauman calls it the identity nucleus, also known as *homo eligens* (man choosing), whose only permanent trait is instability<sup>13</sup>.

Thus, Bauman’s *homo eligens* (man choosing) boldly reaches for the products of culture, tempting him with their form and content, and undertakes diverse social roles: of a pupil, of a smiling fan of a rock band, a computer-game player, an assertive businessman, a soldier/ patriot, a teenager holding a telephone conversation, a man shaving his beard and a sports fan. Simultaneously, we can perceive that each of these performative identities is accompanied by specific emotional states and types of behaviour: anger, joy, feeling of pride, concentration, involvement, dissatisfaction, so characteristic for the time of adolescence, in which two (or even three!) space-time continua are interwoven,<sup>14</sup> constituting a dimension for fundamental questions: Who was I? Who am I? Who will I be? Particularly expressive – probably by its’ very definition – is the character showing anger or even fury, which wonderfully portrays the identity of a sports fan. It probably not only forms a basis for pursuing a football passion or a desire to identify with a favourite sports club, but also – in an indirect manner – becomes an excellent “emotional valve”, offering release for negative emotions teeming in the teenager’s body.

Without doubt, analysis of individual “identity characters” confirms their hybrid (unspecified and isolated – according to Bauman) character, whereas the multi-level co-existence, immersed in boundless variety, phenomenally reflects

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*i rzeczywistość*, Z. Lew-Starowicz, K. Waszyńska (ed.), Poznań 2012, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> which is losing the “former equivalence, stability; (...) (however; author’s note: A. J) even resetting a part of the core of identity does not entail getting rid of a part of own “I”, because such “I” is in constant stillness” Z. Melosik, *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży. W niewoli władzy i wolności*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, Kraków 2013, p. 157.

<sup>12</sup> A. Giddens, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość. “Ja” i społeczeństwo w epoce późnej nowoczesności*, translated by A. Szulżycka, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2001, p. 113.

<sup>13</sup> Z. Bauman, *Płynne życie*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, Kraków 2007, p. 54-55.

<sup>14</sup> Here, the author means the past, the present and the future.

the nature of the culture of diffusion.<sup>15</sup> An excellent confirmation for the assumption above is – in the author's belief – the second and the third "identity creation" reflecting, as the author assumes, the character's attitude to work (in this case learning) and leisure time. Here, we have two images, standing in opposition to one another: the first one, presenting a youth staring impassively at the camera, whose facial expression shows dissatisfaction (and possibly even rebellion) and his outfit (a jeans shirt and a T-shirt) may testify to being in school premises; the second image is, to a degree, the antonym of the first one. Here, the viewers see the smiling face of the teenager, full of positive emotions, dressed in a sports blouse with the name METALLICA on it (possibly symbolising Szymon's participation in an interesting music event – e.g. a concert of his favourite band). Thus, the first identity character probably shows the real (or commonly deemed chronic) "tense" relation along the line teenager – school, which is mentioned by Z. Melosik in a text entitled "Młodzież a przemiany kultury współczesnej." The researcher emphasises that a young man "does not like school, but he takes care not to get into trouble."<sup>16</sup> The motif of education, emphasised in the film, leads the author to the conclusion that formal learning has ambivalent meaning in this approach: emotionally, it evokes disapproval and lack of willingness, yet cognitively, it becomes a "instrumentally important" (however not the only one – in particular in the Polish reality) channel of social mobility<sup>17</sup> and socially approved (in a mentor-like approach) means to pursue the objectives determined by the consumer culture.<sup>18</sup> The opposite connotations are evoked by the second creation, which may be interpreted as greatly desired in the eyes of teenage recipients, as "music plays a very important role in (their; author's note A.J) life, providing (them; author's note A.J) with pleasure and fascination."<sup>19</sup> Without doubt, it forms one of the key elements that create the youth culture, being a carrier of values preferred by the teenagers (as well as an excellent space to negate the rejected values). Its' generation-oriented character is aptly reflected in the words of R.A. Goldstein, according to whom

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Z. Melosik, *Pedagogika i konstrukcje tożsamości młodzieży w "kulturze kontroli" i "kulturze rozproszenia"*, *Studia Edukacyjne* 2014, No. 31.

<sup>16</sup> Z. Melosik, *Młodzież a przemiany kultury współczesnej*, [in:] *Młodzież Wobec (nie)gościnnej przyszłości*, R. Leppert, Z. Melosik, B. Wojtasik (ed.), Wrocław 2005, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej Edukacji TWP, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> A. Gromkowska-Melosik, *Stratyfikacja, ruchliwość społeczna i edukacja*, [in:] *Problemy nierówności społecznej w teorii i praktyce edukacyjnej*, A. Gromkowska-Melosik, T. Gmerek (ed.), Kraków 2008, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> I. Pospiszyl, *Patologie społeczne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2008, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Z. Melosik, *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży. W niewoli władzy i wolności*, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", Kraków 2013, p. 141.

“every generation seems to have its’ own music expression; listening to the newest music may help adults find the existing similarities and differences” (as compared to the music deriving from the period of their youth; author’s note A.J)<sup>20</sup>.

In “The Face”, the expression of virtual space where the modern teenager moves freely also becomes clearly visible. In his next “creation”, the character of the film seems to confirm the scientific discussion (appearing with increasing frequency in the reference books) about the cyber-space being a significant dimension of socialisation and formation of identity of the modern teenagers (the film features the following gadgets: headphones with a microphone and a mobile phone). Without doubt, the virtual space here is presented as a very attractive and, at the same time, a very important sphere of life in which (predominantly) young recipients participate. This attraction is manifested in the specific possibilities that are brought by the promise of fulfilling wishes which did not come true in reality, as “it is possible to create own identity on-line.”<sup>21</sup> Intensified – in particular in the period of adolescence – need of peer acceptance is one of the basic impulses that push the teenagers to “enhance” their personality and/ or body. Excellent areas for pursuing these desires are, in this case, social networking sites the use of which, according to E. Wołyniec, “to create own image is currently becoming a standard.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the connotations for the term “real” are blurred in the ocean of virtual paradoxes, forming a highly-eclectic mosaic of co-existence – or, more precisely – a mental rift between the two worlds: the real and the virtual one. Therefore, it is not surprising that a global teenager, as emphasised by Z. Melosik, “moves on-line with great ease (...) and is in the habit of incessant telephone (mobile) and SMS communication with friends.”<sup>23</sup> Simultaneously, the entire “cultural performance” takes place in the atmosphere of free and uncontrolled flow of information, as – it is worth emphasising – “knowledge has become ex-territorial.”<sup>24</sup> When attempting to conceptualise this “virtual phenomenon”, the author refers to the so-called

<sup>20</sup> R. A Goldstein, *Oh Puhleeze! Learning Youth Culture*, [in:] *Contemporary Youth Culture: An International Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, S. R. Steinberg, P. Parmar, B. Richard (ed.), Westport 2006, Greenwood Press, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> A. Krauze-Sikorka, M. Klichowski, *Świat Digital...*, op. cit., p. 181.

<sup>22</sup> E. Wołyniec, *Zlajkowany czy zhejtowany – zalogowany w kulturze. Analiza portretu współczesnego nastolatka – stan i zagrożenia*, [in:] *Od wielokulturowości miejsca do międzykulturowości relacji społecznych. Współczesne strategie kreowania przestrzeni życia jednostki*, J. Nikitorowicz, J. Muszyńska, B. Boćwińska-Kiluk, (ed.), Warsaw 2014, Wydawnictwo Akademickie ŻAK, p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> Z. Melosik, *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży. W niewoli władzy i wolności*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, Kraków 2013, p. 141.

<sup>24</sup> W. Jakubowski, *Media, tożsamość i edukacja*, [in:] *Kultura mediów, ciało i tożsamość: Konteksty socjalizacyjne i edukacyjne*, Jakubowski, S. Jaskulska, (red.), Kraków 2011, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, p. 24.

"network identity" defined by J. Lipińska as "the overall capacity of presenting self on the Internet, the capacity to manipulate one's identity and, at the same time, the unlimited possibility of manipulating other network users."<sup>25</sup> Thus, in this case we are dealing with a certain array of "cyber-inter(intra)personal" competence, shaping the level of quality of virtual relations.

The work of Szymon Kołoda also features the aspect of sexuality/ corporeality, which is testified by the penultimate character of the young director. It is an excellent portrayal – both in the biological and socio-cultural dimension – of the image of a young man trapped in the cultural practice of caring for his masculinity (shaving). It is worth emphasising that such masculinity no longer possesses such homogeneous nature as it had, for example, in the period preceding the Polish system transformation. The crisis of masculinity present in the contemporary culture<sup>26</sup> gave rise to the birth of new "global trends in reactions to the lack of universal criteria of masculinity."<sup>27</sup> According to M. Doroba-Sawa referring to the ideas of a number of outstanding (both domestic and foreign) researchers of modern culture, there are two elementary paths of evolution of masculinity: hyper-masculinity as a result of distorted reaction of traditional masculinity "disgusted" by feminisation of a number of areas of life and feminisation of the body and sublimation of personality which "replaces the stereotypical masculinity by traditional femininity."<sup>28</sup> When attempting to locate Kołoda's creation in the discourse above, the author is going to risk a presumption – referring both to the colour (red) and the cut of the shirt (sleeveless) in which the character appears before the audience – that he manifests an inclination for the former path (hyper-masculinity). The author's interpretation relies on the popular culture system of meanings of such attributes ("aggressive red" and exposed arms) perceived in the context of a clearly legible longing for the traditional, atavistic (?) masculinity. It is excellently exemplified by the American "action films" creating the image of a "super-male" hero, impressing the audience with his physical stamina (e.g. Rocky). Obviously – in the case of Kołoda's creation – it is yet impossible to determine unequivocally the level of intensity/ involvement with which such hyper-masculinity will develop (if

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<sup>25</sup> K. Grabianowska, *Bezpieczeństwo w sieci. Szanse i zagrożenia komunikacji internetowej z perspektywy pedagogicznej*, [in:] *Wielowymiarowość bezpieczeństwa środowiska wychowawczego*, T. Biernat, J. Gierszewski, (red.), Chojnice 2014, Wydawnictwo Powszechnej Wyższej Szkoły Humanistycznej „POMERANIA”, p. 84.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Z. Melosik, *Kryzys męskości w kulturze współczesnej*, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", Kraków 2006.

<sup>27</sup> M. Doroba-Sawa, *W labiryncie męskiej tożsamości: hipermaskulinizacja versus feminizacja ciała i sublimacja osobowości*, Przegląd pedagogiczny, 2008, No. 2, p. 61.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. 62.

it actually takes place) and which other male models will also be activated. In the analysis, it is necessary to take into account yet another significant aspect mentioned by K. Arcimowicz. Arcimowicz notes that “the contemporary man is feeling cornered by a large number of discussions proposing various, even contrasting, models of masculinity.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, adaptation is manifested by the presence of various combinations and fragmentary connections of identity, leading, in consequence, to the emergence of male “identity mosaic” in which the young men are “drifting” with more or less grace. In this context, the concept of hegemonic masculinity of R. Connell is of crucial importance. The researcher rejects the traditional assumption about the existence of a monolithic model of masculinity, drawing attention to the complexity and variability of elements that are making it up. She formulates a premise on “multiplicity of male constructs”, dependant on the context of time, place, society and culture. Thus – in this context – it is possible to speak about three types of masculinity: hegemonic, marginalised and subordinate.<sup>30</sup> The first one refers to the “culturally dominant ideal of masculinity, focused on authority, physical stamina and power, heterosexuality and paid work.” The drive to power and dominance plays a significant role here. On the other hand, marginalised masculinity is a response to unfilled aspirations of such men who wish to be included in the first group, but are unable – on account of diverse causes – to fully “catch up with the ideal.” The last model characterises men who do not meet the standards of either the first or the second group, and the most common cause is their ethnic origin and/ or homosexual orientation.<sup>31</sup>

Notions pertaining to models and schemes affiliated with a given gender also become noticeable in Kołoda’s fifth creation. The teenage director presents yet another embodiment of masculinity which is, in contrast to the previous one, focused on “here and now” – “a dream of the future.” Thus, one may venture saying that it is an embodiment of boyish dreams about accomplishing Connell’s hegemonic masculinity. Here, Szymon assumes the posture of a mature (in the professional aspect) man who, via his gestures, stance and outfit, expresses affiliation to a high social class. Businessman-like image (a dark suit and a white shirt), enhanced by a note of uncompromising nonchalance (no tie, a cigar) shows a man for whom international financial markets seem to have no secrets. One may get an impres-

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<sup>29</sup> K. Arcimowicz, *Dwa paradygmaty męskości w kulturze męskiej*, Kwartalnik pedagogiczny 1998, No. 1/2, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> K. Wojnicka, E. Ciaputa, *Wprowadzenie: refleksja naukowa nad społeczno-kulturowymi fenomenami męskości*, [in:] *Karuzela z mężczyznami. Problematyka męskości w polskich badaniach społecznych*, (ed.), K. Wojnicka, E. Ciaputa, Kraków 2011, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, p. 12-13.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.



sion that this man, perceived – in a stereotypical approach – as the symbol of high status, power and affluence, probably in this case is also the incorporated quintessence of “high hopes and grand dreams”<sup>32</sup> of a modern teenager about full and “abundant” participation in the consumption society. An excellent exemplification of these wishes is confirmed by the “worship of money” phenomenon<sup>33</sup> and the “worship of success”, forming a part of the dominant cultural messages created by the modern mass media. In this case, the starting point is the commencement of professional work and, more precisely, a career which is a certain (socially approved) measure to meet the purpose such as the “drive to power, position and money.”<sup>34</sup> Interesting conclusions about its’ significance are provided by the studies of A. Cybal-Michalska presented in a monograph entitled “Młodzież akademicka i kariera zawodowa.” They reveal that the concept of career more and more often becomes the synonym of appreciation, authority, feeling of safety and a chance for acquiring valuable experiences by the young people.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, one of the basic perspectives from which it is viewed is the criterion of promotion, perceived – in the perspective of youth – through the prism of accomplishing constant and quick professional elevation.<sup>36</sup> Additional attention-worthy contexts are provided by the attitude of the respondents towards territoriality which, similarly to the multi-global flow of information, does not seem to be a problem for young people, thus creating the “world of border-free careers.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, Zbyszko Melosik makes the following observation when constructing the image of a global teenager: “even though he is not fond of studying, yet he understands that education and certificates are an initial condition of professional success and may become useful in the future.”<sup>38</sup>

The two-minute film quite clearly highlights the issue of the feeling of national identity and patriotism, which is testified by the image of a Polish soldier presented to the audience, holding his right hand on the heart. The vision of a young patriot constructed in this manner remains in a certain opposition to the traditional

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<sup>32</sup> J.J. Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2015, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> W. Pasierbek, M. Fearn, H. G. Ziebertz, *Poland: Family and Faith*, [in:] *Youth in Europe: An international empirical Study about Life Perspectives*, H. G. Ziebertz, W. K. Kay, (ed.), Münster/Hamburg/London 2005, Wydawnictwo LIT, p. 87.

<sup>34</sup> Z. Melosik, *Młodzież a przemiany...*, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>35</sup> A. Cybal-Michalska, *Młodzież akademicka a kariera zawodowa*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, Kraków 2013, p. 303-304.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 310.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 352.

<sup>38</sup> Z. Melosik, *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży. W niewoli władzy i wolności*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, Kraków 2013, p. 141.

concept of a modern teenager, whose identity “is, to a much lesser (or even slight) degree formed by the national and state values and, to a much greater degree, by the popular culture, the mass media and consumption”<sup>39</sup> whereas the world is a global village devoid of any borders.<sup>40</sup> When attempting to explain this emerging scientific dissonance, the author is going to refer to the statement of Krystyna Szafraniec, the author of a report entitled “Młodzi 2011”, who stresses that “young Poles are both romantic and pragmatic at the same time. Contrary to appearances, they are very sensitive about the history of their own nation. This is best visible abroad, when, during social situations, confrontations frequently take place with representatives of various nationalities – the English, the German, the French or the Dutch. It turns out that these young people, apparently indifferent to their own history, can be proud of the national risings and of the fact that their forefathers were always there where people were fighting for freedom. Honour, heroism, courage – even though absent in daily vocabulary of young people – are something that is revealed in the discussions on virtues of nations.”<sup>41</sup> In this place, the following question emerges: what conditions the co-existence of such youthful romanticism and pragmatism? Looking for an answer to this complex problem, the author is going to refer to the concept of contextual identity described – on account of its’ relativism – in categories of the transforming vision of the self, generated as a result of an individual’s participation in various macro-structures.<sup>42</sup> In line with the views of N. Hartmann, the mode of experiencing values is changing, in consequence causing a “shift of the axiological horizon.” This means that the assimilated value (e.g. national) is losing – in the course of time – its’ attraction, thus intensifying the individual’s need to look for a new one. However, this does not mean that it is removed from the human awareness: if “man has already captured a value” and it continues to be significant for him, he can “no longer forget about it – author’s note A.J).”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>40</sup> Z. Melosik, *Postmodernistyczne kontrowersje wokół edukacji*, Wydawnictwo Edytor, Poznań-Toruń 1995, p. 93.

<sup>41</sup> T. Słomczyński, *Jak młodzi rozumieją patriotyzm? Rozmowa z socjologiem*, <http://www.dziennikbałtycki.pl/artykul/883496.jak-mlodzi-rozumieja-patriotyizm-rozmowa-z-socjologiem,id.t.html?cookie=1>, [access: 30.04.2015].

<sup>42</sup> J. Nikitorowicz, *Dylematy patriotyzmu, nacjonalizmu i ustawicznie kształtującej się tożsamości. Wprowadzenie do książki*, [in:] *Patriotyizm i nacjonalizm. Ku jakiej tożsamości kulturowej?*, J. Nikitorowicz (ed.), Kraków 2015, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> E. Ogrodzka-Mazur, *(Nie)obecność patriotyzmu w świadomości aksjologicznej młodego pokolenia Polaków. “Przesuwanie się horyzontu aksjologicznego” czy kryzys w wartościowaniu?*, [in:] *Patriotyizm i nacjonalizm. Ku jakiej tożsamości kulturowej?*, J. Nikitorowicz (ed.), Kraków 2015, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, p. 112.

Summing this discussion up, the author would like to recall the metaphor of cultural surfing (which was used in the works of Z. Bauman "44 Letters from the Liquid Modern World", R. Kapuściński "Lapidaria", and M. Stranger "Surfing Life"), which, in the author's belief, excellently explains the specific identity of a modern teenager (and not only a teenager), permanently drifting on the waves of the pop-cultural ocean. A multi-coloured repertoire of proposals and possibilities allows for – at least temporarily – feeling a part of (some) whole, yet prevents or significantly hinders reaching a timeless, cohesive image of one's Self (referring to the traditional way of defining identity). Here, integrity appears as a heterogeneous construct adopting the form of a mosaic of various social worlds, constantly "accepted" and "exchanged for the new ones" in the catalogue of life experiences. This peculiar "identity rift" results, as noted by A. Giddens, that in the modern times "an individual is forced to create and rebuild its' identity on account of changing experiences of daily life and a tendency of modern institutions for fragmentation of individual identity."<sup>44</sup> Paraphrasing the researcher's words, the author makes an assumption which is, at the same time, a form of conceptualising the phenomenon described by him. Namely, the necessity of permanent "rebuilding" of identity assumes – in the author's opinion – a form of unspecified and, to a certain degree, socially enforced adaptation with respect to the non-uniform and culturally unspecified conditions in which a modern teenager has to function. Additionally, there is also the problem of "retaining the feeling of own exceptionality"<sup>45</sup> and originality." As emphasised by Z. Bauman, "every postulated and/ or searched for identity (identity as a problem and as a task) is involved in a dual dependency, from which it is impossible to get free. It navigates between the extremities of uncompromising individuality and total belonging."<sup>46</sup> Balancing on the border of Erikson's intimacy vs. isolation<sup>47</sup> is well exemplified – in a social approach – by Bauman's concept of an individual in which a man, on the one hand, undertakes various practices to shape his own individuality and uniqueness and on the other, in a more or less conscious manner, falls into the apathy of plainness, becoming uncritically subject to the "exclusive trends" displayed in the consumption culture, in consequence leading to social uniformity of individualism. Thus, in line with Z. Bauman, "the

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<sup>44</sup> A. Giddens, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość. "Ja" i społeczeństwo w epoce późnej nowoczesności*, translated by A. Szulżycka, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2006, p. 254.

<sup>45</sup> S. E. Wood, E. R. Green-Wood, *The World of Psychology*, Allyn and Bacon, Needham 1999, p. 327.

<sup>46</sup> Z. Bauman, *Płynne życie*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2007, p. 50-51.

<sup>47</sup> E. Erikson, *Tożsamość a cykl życia*, translated by M. Żywicki, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2004, p. 90.

paradox consists in the fact that ‘individualism’ is a ‘herd instinct’ and the order of the crowd. Being an individual does not mean differing from the crowd, being like everybody else<sup>48</sup>. The experience of such a paradox may, in consequence, lead to a situation where the individual (a teenager) incessantly choosing or, using the psychological terminology of James Marcia, exploring inner and outer worlds not only searches, but browses the subsequent levels of identification, postponing the moment of accepting a specific obligation (sometimes for the whole life).

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<sup>48</sup> Z. Bauman, *Płynne...* op. cit., 28.

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