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Conditions of an Efficient Dialogue with the Contemporary Youth

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Provokers and “no lifes”: *Loośne Gatki* —
the youth on online forum

The thesis suggesting that the contemporary youth's life is more and more integrated with the Internet, which, in turn, influences their social functioning, does not seem to require particular substantiation nowadays. Already a decade ago the Internet was a place that made it possible to establish new relationships, exchange opinions on interest forums, and find groups of peers with similar hobbies. However, within the last couple of years it has become the kingdom of social media, or social networking site, where millions of people inform, whoever desires to know, what they had for breakfast, who they started dating, who they broke up with, or what type of music they recently got to like. The phenomenon of *Nasza Klasa* (Our Class) or Facebook may constitute a food for thought for sociological analyses in a great many aspects, be it the propensity for mental and physical exhibitionism, or “transient enthusiasm” for uniting in protest against or in support of various social and legal initiatives, the protests leading to suspension of ratifying ACTA treaty in Poland and elsewhere, to name just one. Therefore, can the Internet constitute the source of answer to the question about the youth of the second decade of the 21st century? Arriving at such a conclusion is not particularly risky. It is

more difficult to decide whether the functioning of the young man in the World Wide Web has a degenerating influence on them or rather rather impacts them positively.

Having one's personal account or a profile on a widely recognizable and available website is not any longer a distinction; it rarely stems from a real necessity, and sometimes even prompts contempt among young people. The Internet, similarly to every substantial any real-life, material society, has its own elite strata, to which a young person, already bored with Facebook, will possibly aspire. Surely, every group concentrated around a given interest portal perceives itself to some degree as an elite. Fans of a given car make, admirers of a "cult" game, collectors of sneakers, or supporters of a given football club — all of them somehow believe they are unique. Sometimes, a view of such an elitism is also shared by people from the out-group, especially when good intentions are not enough to become a member thereof. Those who protest in the streets wearing the Guy Fawkes masks and demanding the protection of liberties in the virtual world, did not automatically become the members of Anonymous, that is, an organization of hackers, the identification symbol of which is the above-mentioned mask. Moreover, there are places which are only ostensibly available, places where everyone can create an account and join a group, however, standing out from a peculiar atmosphere, language, and manner of the "regulars" is quite promptly noticeable. The latter's particular characteristic is that they would not be able to exist outside the Internet and it is precisely the Web that made it possible for them to appear and it maintains their existence. Supporters of Stal Gorzów (football club) or fans of vintage cars are well able to retain their integrity without the Internet. The case with the members of the forum on the website Hip-hop.pl is completely different.

The very portal was launched in the year 2000, according to its authors, with a view to "popularizing the worldview that derives from the culture of Hip-Hop and its tradition." Over the period of 17 years, several hundred thousand users registered on the forum, however, it is impossible to define the precise number, since it happens that one person creates several accounts and despite the fact the administrator aims at curbing such a practice, he cannot have full control over this activity. Nowadays the most active group of users are the young people. In spite of the fact that no statistics are available, based on the statements of the very users, we can assume that the "lower age limit" is junior high school. As for the upper limit — there are not many people that would be over the age of thirty. Therefore, these are students or young people who have just graduated and found jobs. In theory, they all should be fans of rap or/and remaining components the hip-hop culture: dance and graffiti. In prac-

tice, the section of the forum which is most popular is the one that was created for discussion about everything that goes beyond the culture of hip-hop, referred to as *Loošne Gatki* ('loose pants'). The forum's name is a pun coined in a grotesque internet language, the most appropriate rendition of which into regular colloquial language would be 'casual chats'. What can we expect after delving deeper into the Internet exchanges of this platform's users?

After several minutes of browsing through the website, the dominating conclusion is that it constitutes a cluster of users who have particular moral, epistemological, associative preferences, and who are characterized by a lack of ability to express themselves comprehensibly, without making spelling or grammatical mistakes. What support such a theory are several topics found on the main page (original spelling): "I wanted to grab 2 beers, I dronk 12", ANIMALS THAT YOU DON'T GIVE A F*CK ABOUT", "YOU EVER OFFERED SEX TO YOUR FRIEND OUT OF BOREDOM", "movies with famous actors' dicks [homo]", "Why is Frisky a Whore?!?!?!". Even though vulgar comments, offending other people and not contributing to the discussion are forbidden by the site's rulebook, in practice there is unlimited leeway in this respect. When you go deeper into the discussion and acquaint yourself with the majority of active users and start to understand the contexts and all the mental leaps which are involved there... well, the conclusions might be even more pessimistic. *Loošne Gatki* seems to be a place where juvenile degenerates manifest their personalities and the comments they leave not only push the envelope when it comes to good taste but also go beyond the legal limits. Therefore, even if we equip ourselves with the postulates of anthropological relativism and attempt to explore this community withholding any judgment, as we would while examining a barbaric culture, an epistemological shock is still guaranteed. The vulgar language ceases to shock quite fast. Indeed, in comparison with posting photographs of one's feces or reproductive organs, it is only the lightweight. The majority of users are males and many topics are dedicated to sex. Since, as the users themselves notice, it is not so easy to find a girlfriend and have intercourse with her, the theme of masturbation, raised without any embarrassment, connected with fantasizing with whom and how one would have sex, appears frequently. As we can easily guess, there is more pornography in these descriptions than romantic visions. Tens of topics concern alcohol and these are both disputes over the best kind, quality and brand, as well as descriptions of experiences collected during drinking sprees. Whereas these are usually not relations from any especially important events, they are most often short descriptions of lonely intoxication in front of computer screen and hangover the following day, "drinking to the forum" is

a very popular entertainment among the portal users. Topics concerning drugs also appear, however, we have to acknowledge that such ones are not as popular as the ones dedicated to alcohol.

The one who crossed the line between what can still escape the public opinion and what already raises a clamour, is an individual of a great many nicknames, mainly known as Liryczny Wandal and JA-CENTY. His beginnings in the forum date back to the times when he was young and, as one of not so many, revealed his face to other users — the movies in which he appeared and which he uploaded were controversial even for the other users of the forum, who were already known for their perversion. These movies did not only show the behaviour of the main character that qualified for a psychiatric examination, but also included descriptions of his real and imaginary experiences with prostitutes or absurd relations from the alleged rapings that Pope John Paul II did on him. Finally, when he made a series of movies in which he announced his plan to rape his few-years-old sister, the forum exploded. The latter case reverberated loudly in the mass media when the Internet users in large droves started to file complaints about the insane degenerate and of course attracted the interest of the Polish police, but also Irish Garda Síochána, since it turned out that Liryczny Wandal lives with his family in Portlaoise, Ireland. The suspected rapist-pedophile turned out to be a 19-year-old schizophrenic that lived with his parents (Polish immigrants) and did not commit any of the deeds which he announced and, as it seems, did not even have such an intention. So, why did he do it? The very schizophrenia is by no means an explanation here, since it was about something else — the desire to become the “most famous user in the history of the forum.” What does it mean?

In order to understand the specificity of the Hip-Hop.pl forum, as well as similar virtual communities of young people, we need to keep in mind that the bidding principles there are similar to those of every other social group. The young people who meet on the forum are not really some extreme social outcasts, and they can be described by the means of a sociogram to a large extent resembling the one that we can use to describe, for instance, a class in school. Therein, however, three elements differ, are peculiar to the forum, which influences the character of the entire community: the very character of the internet communication restricting “face-to-face” communication, the lack of control or supervision from adults, and anonymity (as the example of Liryczny Wandal proved — only ostensible, when things exceed some, namely legal, borders).

What is the most desired “commodity” on *Loośne Gatki? Beka* (a colloquial expression for laughter, fun, derision). So everything that arouses the interest, most often connected with laughter by the remaining users

of the forum. The one who “delivers *beka*” becomes notable at ones, in turn, gaining recognition, which is quite measurable, since as part of their profiles everyone can “evaluate” other members. The one who awakens interest and acclaim with the topics that he or she establishes/starts, has the chance to become the *fame*. *Fame* is an individual who is highly recognizable, many forum users admit to be friends with him (regardless of whether they have positive or negative opinion about him) and who is believed to be an informal leader. In order to become a *fame* one must simply “deliver *beka*,” however, what is the most appreciated is one’s own original creative method, referred to in the forum as “provocation” or *provo* for short. It might be, e.g. impersonating a girl, however, in this case the falsehood is sensed very fast. What took much longer was a provocation organized by a user known by the nickname GejOkej!, who for long months aroused controversy not so much with his leftist outlooks, but with the descriptions of ever hotter moments from his homosexual, and exposed as false, romance. Someone else got acclaim when he posted information that suggested that a very famous Polish hip-hop artist died in a car crash, which was amplified to such a large extent that the very artist had to deny the information about his death, and the administrator of the Hip-Hop.pl portal once again had to help the police to establish the identity of the provoker.

Liryczny Wandal’s actions were also an instance of provocation and indeed he is so far the only user of *Loośne Gatki* with whom a Polish TV channel has conducted an interview, which, for a short time, hoisted his popularity up. However, on the air he lost a lot of his courage and seemed to behave more like a sick, terrified person, who knows that he went too far and was incapably trying to explain he was sick, took medication and had never wanted to hurt his sister and it all had been a stupid joke. Since proceeding with a police investigation, let alone taking legal action against him, was in this case groundless, Liryczny Wandal did not suffer any legal punishment whatsoever. He was not even prohibited from using a computer and accessing the Internet, due to which he still takes part in the life of the forum, however, we need to underscore that his behaviour also had an opposite result from what he intended. Since what it triggered was a moral mechanism in many users (maybe also a natural reaction to mentally ill people), which helps them delineate the border between “laughter” and an unacceptable action. These users turned away from the provoker, either openly condemning his behaviour, or ignoring and humiliating him. We can say that he would rather not become a sociometric star, although obtaining the result of such a test would undeniably be interesting.

Is there anything that would certify that in *Loośne Gatki* there is more sociological cliché than we can observe at first glance? Indeed, since

resorting only to controversial contents included in this site would also be a manipulation. Let us now choose, similarly as above, some of the topics from the first page of the forum, however, this time not concentrating on topics arousing negative emotions (once again original spelling): “for my brothers abroad”, “IT IS WORTH TO LIVE FOR SUCH MOMENTS”, “Leftists or Rightists”, “New very probable transfers in Wisła Kraków”, “I TOOK AND BROUGHT A HOMELESS DOG A SECOND AGO.” All of them concern what the topic suggests, so there are greetings for Polish immigrants that work in many parts of EU, expressing happiness connected with getting a job, discussion about political views, debates connected with the nuances of the Polish major league or descriptions of home unpleasant consequences of bringing home a stray dog. Obviously, even the most positive topic will not prompt only constructive comments from other users. One way or another, there is not a tad of “sugarcoating” by some linguistic politeness and still the Internet slang may constitute a barrier difficult to overcome by people from the outside. It remains visible, however, that young people want to talk about what they have always wanted to talk about: their experiences and confronting the world of adults, as well as everything else that people would talk about in the past: politics, religion, sport, music, and literature.

It was mentioned that the peculiar features of the public platform which the Internet has become, are anonymity and lack of control or supervision from adults, which can be the reason for both the uncompromising and not caring for political correctness appearances, and which are, in turn, the factors making the creation of provocation possible. What we should add is that the third feature that describes using the Internet — lack of direct interpersonal contact — is strongly connected with a different phenomenon — alienation occurring in the reality. Obviously, it is nothing revolutionary. Psychology and sociology have already observed this phenomenon of wallowing oneself off from the outside world by the means of a computer screen. Are the young users of the Hip-hop.pl portal aware that they are or can be its victims? We can go as far as to say that the community even created a “paradigm” that concerns alienation of young beneficiaries of the information technology boom of the beginning of the 21st century, to whom drawing from this boom brought damage in the form of a new type of social pathology. It is very clear here who has “lost their life” and who is a “no life.” It is an individual who spends most of his free time on the forum and is incapable of refraining from comments even on Friday or Saturday evenings, when it would be right to at least pretend to be in a club with friends. It is also the one who never had a girlfriend, never had sex, does not have many friends and practically does not have a social life. He believes that nobody understands him,

he cannot find a common language with his parents. “No lifes” are perfectly aware that it is an impairment and do not seem to be disabled people stupefied by technology, in whom the Internet and computer games replace reasoning. However, they show features typical for addicted people — there are many proclamations like “I am leaving the forum, from now on I win my life,” which turn out to be a failure as often as with the attempts to overcome different addictions. What does “winning life” mean? First and foremost, exactly leaving the forum, finding a girlfriend, a good job and friends, with whom one would spend time not only on the Internet.

It would be unfair to claim that *Loośne Gatki* is an intellectual gutter and a side-show of deviations, corrupting everyone who takes part in it. What seems more apt is a comparison to a subculture, in which a pathology manifests itself in an exceptionally iconoclastic way, but it does not give basis for claiming that it is of a unique type in itself. Positive attitudes, as well as pertinent commentaries regarding the reality, are also not a rarity there. On the other hand — how different is the desire to be a *fame* from a simple need of social acceptance and how different are provocation and blatant falsehood from a contribution to revealing the truth about the other human being and oneself. *Loośne Gatki* is therefore not an incomprehensible culture that requires attitude in the spirit of cultural relativism, instead it is an uncensored reflection of the way the Polish teenagers sometimes are. What they really think about the world and their situation in it in the times when there are fewer and fewer role models and taboo subjects, and sex, violence, disease and death are filmed by the means of cellphones and uploaded to the media, which are available even to young children.

Sexting as a sign of dehumanization of interpersonal relations

The cellphone has become an inseparable attribute of a contemporary individual. There is a common belief that having a cellphone brings a sense of freedom, independence and safety, also owning a device of the latest generation, which is the multiple functions of which are constant distraction, is a status marker, as it means keeping up with the trends, having a good job, and supposedly translates into an extensive network of valuable contacts. The cellphone has become, as M. McLuhan would put it “an unwanted guest who is difficult to resist in both time and

space.”¹ Mobile phones are used by almost everyone, from children in kindergartens to seniors. They are a great blessing of our time, but also a serious problem...

It turns out that the multiplicity and diversity of functions offered by the modern mobile phones is not only a determinant of utility, but also a kind of nuisance or even a problem that increases anxiety, especially when we look closer at the dependence between the phone and the behaviour of its owners. Simple calling, texting, answering is not dangerous or harmful in itself, but the compulsive and uncontrollable repetition may, however, significantly disrupt the functioning of an individual. Cesare Guerreschi defines those compulsions as pathological, verging on fetishism. “The attachment to the phone is transformed into something that resembles an emotional connection.”² The fact how essential the cellphone has become is most often realized when one cannot use it. The connection between the device and the user often goes beyond the usual interest in the device itself. In a way, all users are dependent on the phone, however, a more serious problem — cellphone dependence syndrome — is decided by the quantitative aspect, determining the time that is spent on using the device. Cellphone dependence syndrome is characterized by: paying a lot of attention to having a phone, not leaving it even for a moment; the phone becomes an intermediary and the most important tool for everyday contact with people; feeling a deep discomfort when not in possession of a charged device, bad mood, anxiety, at times even panic attacks; phone use dictated by emotional and social factors; treating the phone as a tool for continuous control of the loved ones, feeling a constant need to contact someone, impulsively calling someone without a proper reason; justifying your addiction with convenience and safety; nervous monitoring whether someone is calling or not, or carrying spare batteries; feeling the strong need to belong to a group and gain recognition, a form of social phobia or fear of loneliness, avoidance of contact with others, choosing phone calls or texts instead of talking face to face. Honest statements from phone users confirm the mentioned behaviours: “I admit, I am a prisoner of my phone. If I forget to take the phone with me, I have the impression that there was definitely a million people calling me. At the same time, when I do not have my phone with me, I realize how much I am dependent on it” (Technologie, które zniszczyły nasze życie. <http://tech.wp.pl>).

¹ M. McLuhan: *Zrozumieć media*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Naukowo-Techniczne, 2004, p. 351.

² C. Guerreschi: *Nowe uzależnienia*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Salvator, 2006, p. 206.

Regarding the mobile phone dependence syndrome, we can indicate a couple of particular types:

- **texting addiction** is characterized by using the device mainly for texting, feeling the constant need to receive and send text messages — according to a survey conducted in the United States by the Pew Research Center within the Pew Internet and American Life project, girls send or receive an average of 80 texts a day, boys — 30; the situation is similar with Polish youth (Nastolatki wysyłają 100 sms-ów dziennie. <http://tech.wp.pl>). It is also characterized by a specific fingerprint on the thumb, in extreme cases “thumb syndrome,” a condition of thumb ischemia caused by constant texting, wear of the keyboard on the device, mood dependent on the quantity of texts received, sending text messages to oneself (e.g., from a computer) or to people who are physically present around you.

Excessive texting is classified by Jerald Block as one of mental illness of civilization. His theory of mental illness and texting is supported with arguments which state that these people (addicted to texting) could be assigned a couple of important rules. All it takes is to take the phone away from an addicted person and he or she becomes aggressive, restless, distracted or even falls into depression. A perfect example could be children who get cellphones from parents at an early age. Often parents do not notice the fact that children divide toys into the “cooler” and the “less cool” ones, obviously if a child gets its dream toy, the ones it played with earlier are going to be set aside. It is the same with cellphones, children treat them as great fun and cannot cope without them. When it comes to such addictions, adults are no better. According to Block, addiction among adults is not as trivial as with children, namely, adult addicts usually react in an aggressive manner, they want to search for another phone which they could use.³ The addiction is also connected with the usage of the built-in T9 dictionary, which speeds up the typing process by offering users a ready combination of words they can use. In August 2009, Michael Abramson, an epidemiologist at Monash University in Melbourne, published the results of a survey conducted among 11—14-year-olds according to which, young people become more impulsive, mindless and make more spelling errors than their peers who do not use the T9 dictionary. Abramson also warns that since we are dealing with minds that are still in development, there is a risk that the negative changes will become irreversible. Polish scientists have no doubt about the influence of the T9 dictionary on children as well, they claim that such tools lead to

³ J. BLOCK: “Issues for DSM-V: Internet Addiction.” *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 165 (2008), pp. 306—307.

total illiteracy, children and young adults not only write badly, but also speak badly.

- **addiction to new models** is characterized by buying ever-new models of the cellphones/mobile phones;
- **cellphone exhibitionism** is characterized by paying a lot of attention to the colour, style and price when buying a new device, also by showing everyone its functions, having loud conversations on it, allowing it to ring for a longer period of time so that everyone can hear it, carrying the phone in hand with the display active (glowing at night like skylights);
- **gaming addiction** is characterized by displaying excessive interest in mobile phone games, the device becomes a gaming console, frequent playing until the moment when the record is beaten in a given game;
- **“phone turned on” syndrome** characterized by fear of even momentary shutting down of the device, sometimes connected with overcharging the battery;
- **ringxiety** characterized by hearing the ringtone or feeling the vibration which turns out to be just an auditory hallucination. David Laramie, a PhD student at Alliant International University in Los Angeles studied the “phantom” ringtones and noticed that the more one uses a mobile phone, the more often he or she hears them. When he conducted a survey it turned out that 67% of the adults admitted to the telephone phobia. These people pay higher bills, use more subscription minutes and send more texts. They are also more impulsive (BŁOŃSKA, Fantomowe dzwonki telefoniczne. <http://nt.interia.pl>).

Speaking of dangers regarding the use of the cellphone, one should not forget that the device poses one more threat that fills us with particular anxiety and is often aimed at children and youth — cyberbullying.

A new phenomenon — sexting

The phenomenon of sexting has become more and more popular over the last couple of years. The term means a situation where young people, including those who are less than 15 years old, send around their naked or half-naked pictures using MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) or upload them to the Internet. The idea itself is not really nothing new. Before the age of the Internet, this phenomenon was known as phone sex. With the development of new technologies, it began to evolve. The precursor of this “trend” (however, in a dynamic version) was Jennifer Ringley, who during her studies began showing her room where a camera was installed

and broadcasted for 24 hours a day, whereas she acted as if she had been alone. Her website in just one week in 1998 was viewed 100 million times.⁴ The static variant is simply presenting amateur photos showing a naked body, in other words, sexting. The phenomenon of sexting can be seen in many Western European countries, such as the United Kingdom, France, in the USA and Canada and also in Australia. Young people's dissemination of unambiguously explicit photos with highly sexual content by using cellphones or uploading them on the Internet did not go unnoticed in Poland. In the United Kingdom, the Britain's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Center (CEOP) revealed that among 2,000 questioned people aged 11–18 majority received such texts or emails and approximately 70% knows the sender personally. On the other hand, data from the BeatBullying foundation shows that nearly 40% of them claim to have received a sexually unambiguous text or email. According to a survey conducted among young people in England, 23% of those messages came from a boyfriend or a girlfriend who was in a relationship with the receiver, 45% from friends and 2% from adults (Brytyjska młodzież oszalała na punkcie sextingu. <http://palmtop.pl>).

A 15-year-old Saskia (name changed for the sake of anonymity) called a youth helpline — ChildLine — when her female friend took a picture of her in the changing room. “To me it was just a joke, fun. I asked her to delete this photo, but all she did was laugh and refused to do it. She teased me and said she would post it on the Internet, on MySpace. I tried to take away her phone. In the end we had a fight and she left.” Later, Saskia discovered that the picture indeed was uploaded to MySpace — a social networking site belonging to News Corp — with a comment “she wants it.” Her phone number was placed right next to it, with a comment encouraging men who “want to have fun.” As a result, horrified Saskia received a lot of texts from boys. The therapist from ChildLine advised her to write to MySpace with a request to remove the photo, which they did. “It was a terrible experience. I do not wish this for anyone. Some people may consider it funny, but it is not. It is embarrassing as well as humiliating and it should have never happened” (Niebezpieczne zabawy nastolatków. <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl>). In France, a dedicated telephone line was launched in 2008 where professionals answer questions about the Internet and video games asked by children or parents. About 6% of these conversations are about the consequences of sexting. In one of the French schools, the principal interrupted his students' fun; teenage couples were competing with uploading films made by themselves during their most intimate moments.

⁴ T. BIENIAS: *Internet*. Kraków 1998, p. 79.

In the United States, according to the National Campaign to Support Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (a national organization for the prevention of teenage and unplanned pregnancy), every fifth teenager admits sending via texts and uploading in the Internet his or her naked pictures and other erotic content. The first known person to experience the tragic effects of sexting was Jessie Logan, a student in her last high school year who sent a naked picture to her boyfriend. After their breakup he distributed Jessie's photo. The girl tried to deal with the bullying she had to incur from her peers, such as being called names or even being ousted from the graduation. She even made an appearance on a TV show, where she warned other teenagers against sending their naked pictures to anyone. The oppression from people she met every day was so difficult for her that Jessie finally decided to do the worst thing possible — on July 3, 2008 at the age of 18 she committed suicide. Whereas 13-year-old Hope Witsell, a student at Beth Shields Middle School in Ruskin, Florida, just before the holiday became the object of cruel mockery at school. Today it remains unknown how the shameful photograph of Hope found its way into the public. Perhaps she sent it to a boy whom she liked. Another rumor is that the picture was uploaded by Hope's jealous friend from her own cellphone. It did not matter for the 13-years-old's surrounding, who in consequence was being harassed, poured with drinks and spat onto. Her friends had to keep her surrounded like a living shield in order to protect her from being called names such as a "whore" or "slut." The girl's trustee was her diary, in which she wrote, trying to convince herself that she was not a whore. However, the stress caused by her unfriendly peers led to the point where she could not stand the humiliation anymore. The doctor who reported death by hanging also diagnosed many signs of self-mutilation (MILEWSKA, Sexting — komórkowe porno nastolatków. <http://www.papilot.pl>).

In 2008, Goshen, Ohio, a 19-year-old cheerleader captain, was convicted on charges of taking obscene photos of her 15-year-old friend and herself. At the same time in Texas, a 13-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion of possessing/being in possession of child pornography after being sent a naked photo of a friend (MURAD, Teen sexting craze leading to child porn arrests in US. <http://technology.timesonline.co.uk>).

Among the recent sexting cases in the USA were three girls from Pennsylvania who have sent their naked pictures to boyfriends. The police said they were 13- to 14-years-old whereas boys were 16- to 17-years-old. All of them were accused of producing child pornography (Sexting shockingly common among teens. <http://www.cbsnews.com>).

The phenomenon of sexting did not bypass Poland. A 16-year-old girl from Oświęcim established contact with a 20-year-old boy. They had

a nice conversation and the teenager trusted the man about whom she knew only that he lived in the vicinity of Kraków. When the virtual boyfriend asked her to take and send him a few naked pictures, she did so promptly. The man almost instantaneously uploaded them on one of the sexual social networks. Information about the pictures quickly reached her schoolmates. Marta learned from the Internet that she appeared in a pornographic video. It was a form of revenge from her ex-boyfriend for leaving him. The video is about two minutes long, and it consists of several scenes. Professional pornographic shots were added to the amateur video, such as close-ups on the sex organs. You can only see Marta's face, not even once, her partner's. A name, last name, study field and email are included in the video. She was getting a few or even a dozen or so offers a day. Emails were mostly in Polish but also in other languages (STASIŃSKA, *Sexting, czyli niebezpieczne zabawy*. <http://partnerstwo.onet.pl>).

A student from a junior high school in Koźmin Wielkopolski recorded a 45-second-long pornographic video with her and a dog in the lead roles. It might have not leaked out if not for the fact that she showed the video to her friends. One of them stole the recording. It is not known how, but the video was uploaded to the Internet and it reached a wide range of viewers, not only the residents of Koźmin. Although the video almost immediately disappeared from the Internet its main character is well known in the area by her name and surname. So there is no end to pointing fingers, calling names or yelling at her. It is difficult to explain the motives which led the girl to make such a video. There can be various hypotheses: It could have been a one-time incident, related to the peer pressure, rivalry among girls, or simply a sexual experiment (KRUPA, *Skandaliczny film pornograficzny czternastolatki z Koźmina*. <http://www.gloswielkopolski.pl>).

Concluding remarks: Desacralization and dehumanization vs. care for the relationship sphere

Taking into account the aforementioned proliferation of ignorance, general moral downfall and dysfunctionality of human relationships, how can we still communicate with each other so that we are noticed, heard, so that what we are saying is paid a proper attention to? The task in question is certainly difficult, but it is feasible, the more so since the description of the contemporary youth's social milieu seems accurate, as we have to deal with:

- **Desacralization of everyday life**, which I understand as the expulsion of the many elements in daily functioning of the man, which embedded him or her within the sphere of sacrum. Today, it is deliberately “erased,” covered, expelled from the common social space as unwanted, undesired for its cultural correctness. Although this desacralization of everyday life is also connected to the essential elements, namely, the departure from the rhythm of life with the sacraments, practices, which until recently for many were constitutive for their lives. This is especially true for the younger generation who in the moment of accepting the Sacrament of Confirmation rapidly abdicate from the community of the Church. Certainly one of the reasons for this is the fact that we do not find enough communication channels with them, with their world and the way they perceive it. Perhaps for an attentive reader the previous chapters may seem iconoclastic, nevertheless, it is also a world visited by the young, or even a world that enslaved them. In the face of such a world we must find a remedy, neutralize its toxicity to the point where we can defend the young from living in the moral nihilism, abnegation or even pathology. Its (the world’s) interaction vector is aimed towards the maximum incentive to satisfy lusts and passions which, despite their objective existence in humans, are rather to be left dormant than awaken. The sphere of sacrum in a broader sense also includes respect for humanity and everything associated with it, such as respect for the extraordinary human psyche, human corporeality, and the social nature of the man. They also become an artifact of the agenda of the world given to the technology and enslaved in a more or less dynamic way through its dehumanization (Ortega y Gasset, 1947). Sign of this state are illustrated by the content mentioned earlier.

So, how one should act, how to communicate with young people who are (most often) the first victims of both desacralization of everyday life and the dehumanization of interpersonal relations?

First of all: Do not give up the space to the unwanted, undesirable world... it seems that the maxim mentioned numerous times, that “the evil prevails because the good is withdrawing” also has its application here. If the public space is weeded with different images, contents, symbols, which compromise the social majority of the sense of norm, cultural, religious or juridical acceptance, then it is impossible, even in the name of cultural tolerance, to allow the domination of the sensitivity of the majority by the brightest in its usurping minorities! Absolutely, I do not put forward the thesis of not giving the minority the right to be around, but it would be rational to keep the proportion between the two, mutual respect for each other and sensitivity to the feelings of this often ignored majority, based on the principle that “they have everything, it will

not hurt them.” On the other hand, most people neglect to communicate the fact that they too have rights, and even expect that their feelings, emotional state and respect for their values, symbols, sensibilities were taken into account. For if they would not fight for their rights themselves, who would represent them? The problem with the modernity is the situation in which an adult generation has fallen into a self-inflicted axiological nap, having the belief that since we profess good, it shall defend itself. It is not so these days. The fact that you are right and have the arguments supporting your view is not a sufficient defense of it being self-evident. The massive hate, network manipulations and/or usual (unfortunately, in the mediatized reality) repetition of clichés, half-truths or vulgar “fake news” distorts the consciousness of the audience. The earlier subchapters discuss their efficiency, which is directly proportional to the amount of time spent online, the normative chaos, and the news humbug performed in the network. Therefore, I recommend an active attitude in the language of faith: *actively (not just declaratively) bearing witness* and multiplication of the activities in various forms of care and attention to the values and rights we represent!

My next recommendation might seem a trite repetition of the eternal educational truth: *Be a clear witness to the growth of your child*. If your intention is to entrust him or her with the transmission of generations: faith, language of their fathers, love for the Homeland, respect for the values, you must live by them yourself, that is for one thing, for the other — leave nothing to doubt. You *must* talk about it and provide examples. Why am I formulating this recommendation so overbearingly in the plainest language? Because the unwanted world with the power of a waterfall overwhelms our world with its dynamics and greed, it stuns, shocks and conquers. Therefore, the prevention should be adequate to the strength and power of external pressures, full consolidation of the home around the split axiological system and frequent contemplation of it seems to be desirable here. One cannot simply forget about the effect of the “stronghold under siege,” namely, in the face of the “evil” storm, we tighten our ranks, clench our fists and stand strong against it, forgetting or neglecting the affirmation of values that, aptly called, characterize our world, that is, openness for another human and an attitude of accepting them. Therefore, I raise doubts about how effectively, with such a fierce face and determination in the eyes (some may call it “madness”), are we able to open ourselves to those who surround us looking at our “barricades” and would like to talk to us, but due to the psychological loop that “here I stand on the barricade, and I am not here to negotiate” I block myself on the possibility to gain allies and break the ranks of the opponents.

Secondly: *To attend upon no matter what, to give a message about your own home as symbolic/real safe harbour to which you can always return...* the fact that at a certain stage of socio-psychic development, a young person, like a young bird eager to fly, will leave the family nest, is a natural state of things. It is not justified to hold them “short,” to distrust that they will be able to cope with the everyday life. This distrust is more of a distrust of parents to themselves, in what has become their participation in the process of raising a child to self-reliance. If the fear for a child’s self-reliance is dominant over its right to do so, then it means you do not trust in things you have done for your child over the years. At times it is a late thought, sometimes overly emotional and unjustified. This does not change the fact that it is both acute and paralyzing to parents, and leads to even more irrational, rather than sensible, behaviour.

Therefore, the desirable state is to instill in young people (e.g., at home) the belief that wherever they may find themselves, in any trouble, the door to their home is always open, so that they have a place to return to. Of course, it does not come all by itself, it is a process of shaping this belief by daily conversations, gestures, behaviours of our close friends towards each other but also the adults attitudes towards young people. If it is more common at home for people to avoid talking about things that happened the night before, to take the strategy of “no talking” or “not to mention what happened” then it is because of such behaviour — avoiding the last nights’ anxiety, gesture of rolling the curtain or looking through the peephole — that will get us nowhere. You should calmly inform the “culprit” about our uncertainty that we felt that he or she was involved in this and that, as a result of this and that. It is better to ask why he or she did not call back, text back, or simply contact us. Not holding grudge or shouting, or lamenting. But calmly, with a complete conviction that you have the very right to do so, to ask. You are together a husband/wife, mother/father and their children, therefore, out of this closeness we can see that there is a commitment to caring, sensibility, alertness and attention. The opposite of all this is to ignore one another, pretend we do not see (which is impossible after all, so why are we doing it?), lack of conversation, giving one another “silent treatment.” If we allow the latter indifferent attitude to dominate our relationship, then the distance between us will continue to grow. It will come to such dissection of intimacy that from the distance of travelled dismissals we will not find the way back... In relations with young people there are two vital things: not to lose the channels of communication, always be ready for it, remain on-line all the time with your children! However, we know that the departure from the family nest is inevitable, therefore it is necessary to have “the window always open” (which has a double meaning — an computer interface

window, as even if he/she left for England, the US, we remain in contact with them through Skype, — other, means a window at the home to which he or she can always fly back). These references are universal in their character, they also refer to the relationship between a rational educator, a coach, a youth leader and the youth themselves. Therefore, I recommend the following attitude: *One is not relieved of his responsibility and complicity for bonds in the daily relationship between household members or the relationship between the young and the adult.* To show the relentlessness and care for the hygiene of these relations and the belief that if I care about them, *I must take care of them*, not just leave them as they are or because of my own sluggishness or ignorance claim that someone less mature, looking for his *modus operandi* for life, who also is at a particular stage of critical development knows better than ourselves how these bonds and relationships should look like.

Thirdly: *To cooperate across the good-willed communities is a strategy of strengthening mutually of the environments and groups which we recognize as those promoting the desired behaviour patterns*, show the attention to good manners, and thus in their actions, are close to the represented values and norms. It seems that this cooperation is also justified for the sake of avoiding the feeling (unfortunately often haunting young people) of being lonely in the represented attitudes or the respect for the normative system. There are various reasons for such narrowing of views, I shall mention two of them: subjective and objective. Subjective often results from perceiving ourselves as the “last righteous” in zeal, fervour and sometimes in the actual loneliness a hermetic belief is made, a very cynical and messianic one: “I am the only one left standing on the battlefield!” Amusing as it is, it is painful for others and also harmful to the person concerned. Painful for others, due to the lack of the appreciation of their presence and effort. Harmful for the person concerned due to the “bleeding in battle,” which at the moment of finding allies or co-fighters need not to be as burdensome as it is.

Besides, this “messianic” virtue-signaling sometimes works like a red rag to a bull, provokes both parties to tease each other and leads to the state of exhaustion from the multiplicity of skirmishes, battles, and natural weakness which, in fact, can be avoided by building a larger army.

Without exaggerating with the use of such a militarized vocabulary, I point out that the most favourable situation is always the one where we can point to the multiplicity of subjects, people who we recognize as our allies and can cooperate with them rather than stay with the stubborn self-identification as “the last white sail.” The cooperation is a compound process, meaning that it is only successful when both parties send “links” to each other when they have mutual acceptance of cooperation.

An example of such an approach is the work of the New Evangelization Schools, the cooperation of which results in three variations:

- charismata;
- forms of activity;
- space of presence.

It is remarkable that their spectacular presence, based on the multiplier effect, that is, cross-linking and implementation of evangelistic undertakings in strengthened teams took place, for instance, during the World Youth Day in Kraków or traditionally during the Jesus Festival. However, it is interesting to notice the significant difference between WYD and JF. The latter is of a special nature, as in opposition to WYD it takes place on the “enemy’s territory,” which might be somewhat misleading and requires an explanation. The Jesus Festival has been organized for a long time (for about eighteen years) during a mass event described by the organizers as “the biggest youth festival in the world” and despite the overgrowth of megalomania the event truly is enormous. Hundreds of thousands of young Poles visit it and have at their disposal various concerts, workshops, and consumer goods. The atmosphere and conviction of the youth marks it as rigour- and morality-free, but also free of the embarrassing habits, customs, and religion. Briefly, it is a land “liberated” from a forced by the world of adults and enigmatic system slavery (the real and the imagined one), as well as an invigorating soil for new concepts, ideas, formulas, which is willingly adapted into thinking and behaviour by youth convinced about their authenticity and self-determination. It is an area that was earlier identified as “enemy territory” because the promoted ideas are not only controversial but also inconsistent (totally) with the course of the event — with what truly happens there. As a result, the slogans talking about freedom from stimulants, such as, for example, alcohol or drugs are completely unreliable and even the youth itself is completely aware of it as the images of the drug and alcohol abusing youth suggest. Slogans about the respect for human dignity quickly find their negative reflection in the necessity to avoid, pass over or even discreetly overtake the participants laying down on the ground in dust, unconscious from alcohol overdose, participants who without any constraints, in front of everybody, fulfill their physiological or sexual needs.

That is why I call it the “enemy territory” and the paradox is that the youth behaving this way are not our enemies. That is why the presence of the Jesus Festival is so important. This presence confirms the legitimacy of the previously mentioned recommendations and also strengthens them with other arguments:

1. The participants of the Jesus Festival are equal to those of the Woodstock Festival, which strengthens their credibility in both kerygmatic and

axiological message, especially since both groups are there because they want to and not have to be there.

2. Another is the element of spontaneity, the unpredictability of the course of interaction, although it is characterized not only by improvisation but also the circumstances of the realization. The point is that the Woodstock valley (the area where WF is situated) is enormous and it provides absolutely no comfort whatsoever, it is in fact just the opposite as the music, noise, funky scents, dust or the rabble comes from every direction. And yet there are conversations taking place in there which sometimes happen to be a breakthrough in the lives of the participants. They experience these hardships together, equally stuck in there, which happens to be the basis of their brotherhood at least for that fleeting moment.

3. Nevertheless, “Jesuslings,” as the participants of the Woodstock Festival call the evangelizers, are perfectly prepared for their role of both evangelizers who preach the kerygma and evangelizers who try to have an interaction with the Woodstock Festival participants who have varying attitudes towards the Jesus Festival. The organizers of the Jesus Festival are well aware of the many different risks, surprises and various circumstances which the evangelizers can encounter during their work. Therefore, in the repertoire of previous trainings and courses, for example, Paul’s, a participant goes through trainings of assertiveness, social communication and reaction to unexpected behaviours and circumstances. The objective is, on the one hand, to prevent unwanted events, and on the other not to emanate fear, uncertainty or unnecessarily tempt the adversaries to provocative behaviour during an interaction. The departure to the festival site is preceded by a perfect recognition of where we are going, with what purpose, what are the circumstances and what is the cultural background of the place. Thus, we protect our people from the vileness of others and from hurting their sensitivity in the face of the obscene, unhygienic and sinful behaviour. This is due to both the concern and care for their moral and aesthetic wellbeing, but also for the duty of being a professional in their actions.

4. “Everyone has his own stage” is the result of the experiences from the Jesus Festival and many other youth festivals, such as the ones in Czerwieńsk nad Wisłą, Wołczyn or even Góra Św. Anny. What I mean by that is that the methods and forms of influencing the youth must be consistent with their current passions, habits and fashion. That is why every event has its own “fanpage,” Instagram or Twitter profile, it is all over the web. Therefore, there is a constantly buzzing question: Does the form obscure the content? If the organizers have a sense of balance, and take care of it, then it is well. Since it cannot be allowed that the chaos, huddle, noise, overdose of stimuli is, no matter the cost, the same during

the suggested alternative events as the ones discussed and referred to as controversial proposals for the youth. The thing is that it does not matter who does it louder, more flashy or modern, but who does it wiser and more reasonably. Unfortunately, the mediatized modernity brings its usurpation and incorporation of meanings into a new way of evaluation what is good and desirable. Therefore, the adequacy of form which takes into account the fashion and trends, does not exclude the normative coherence or the effective transfer of worthy values, educationally desired and socially accepted.

5. “Each stage has its backstage” and if I stick to this analogy, it is to point out that when I step off the stage I need to have a backstage and that is where the variety comes, I will only stick to the strengthening ones. Backstage is both the place free of the noise and the hundreds of thousands eyes tracking your every move but also it is a comfy sofa on which you can safely rest. It is an area outside of the presence of the others, there are only those whose presence you accept or those who care about you. That is why, in the process of influencing youth, it is worth to take care of such a backstage both for them and for yourself. Some of them have a feeling of constant social exposure and they also seem to be in such a state. They expose themselves to it consciously, they seem to have a lot of exhibitionism in them which is less likely coming from their nature as it is from the current technology. I am visible everywhere, I take care of it, so that my every step is registered by the eye of a smartphone, a tablet or a camera. I decide upon it myself and sometimes somebody steals my superficiality, too bad, that is how it works. The ubiquitous industrial, communication or security cameras follow my every step. Nowadays everyone becomes the broadcaster, but also the hero of their broadcast. The screen, the eye of the camera, the waiting for a comment or a reaction builds up anxiety. If it is there I get reinforcement but if the reaction of the public is poor or late, the feeling of panic, failure and injustice unexpectedly increases. Contemporary technology forces and allows for immediacy, when the reactions are postponed we cannot handle it, we become frustrated. This motivates to be more expressive, more abrupt with the transmitted messages as they guarantee more likes, more acceptance and much more comments. Therefore, the compress for these burned with expectation moods should be (only justified) comments posted as often as possible about our family members, during friends meetings in real life, face to face, with the use of verbal communication. As I write this, I clutch my head, recognizing the simplicity of this entry — the human peculiarity is speech — so why do I emphasize that it is worth talking to each other, in real life? Because, as I pointed out in the first chapter, speech is substituted by texts, tweets, presentations and images. Many young peo-

ple do not develop a sufficiently rich language. Of course, the guilt lies with teachers, parents, but when kids cannot speak properly, they make it more sparingly, less often, and finally replace that competence with technology. That is why we have the experience of help, education and therapeutic talks, which are based on the fact that at the beginning of the process, not because the person has terrible communication blockages, but our interlocutor cannot correctly make a sentence. No wonder then that if he cannot call his feelings, emotions, then he is not in the relationship with them. In a word, he cannot understand himself or herself. In such circumstances, I would recommend at least three activities: first, reading activity — we should get young people to start or come back to reading; secondly, verbal activity, which means that young people should simply “talk,” At the beginning they would just talk, as they could, and over time their language and vocabulary should be more “noble”; third: It seems that the hardest one, listening activity — they should listen to themselves and learn to hear others!

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JACEK KURZĘPA

Conditions of an Efficient Dialogue with the Contemporary Youth

Summary

The author evokes and provides a brief description of the contemporary young person's digital habitat. He finds the youth as digital natives spending most of their time online. What results from it is devolution or incapacitation within the scope of other communicative capabilities and entering into a passage of dysfunctions pertaining to the lack of sufficient social competences. Along with the deepening deficiencies within the

said scope, the youth seem to compensate for it by exaggerated expression on the Web, particularly in the social networking activity. Overburdened by the stimuli coming from the digital world, the young people wind up lost in the real one. Therefore, it is necessary to find an adequate way of re-establishing a permanent contact with them. Aside from the above mentioned competition with the new technologies, there arises also a necessity to fight for perpetuating values and morals. The author further reveals and exemplifies the new threatening phenomena originating on the Internet. They included carelessness and pure ignorance within the scope of language usage, the “hating” (online scapegoating) mechanisms, and devastating the tenderness, intimacy and privacy of other human being; the author concludes with presenting the phenomenon of sexting. Each of the enumerated phenomena repress the hitherto values and norms with brutality and impetus of a waterfall. It not only traumatizes an individual, but also affects the community that is helpless in the face of such a behaviour. The latter helplessness stems, on the one hand, directly from the characteristics of desacralized world, which are ruthlessness, brutality and pugnaciousness. On the other hand, however, it results from inaptitude of the “guardians of the old normative order”, for they lack adequate and compatible communication devices and capabilities to use them. One may assume that dehumanization and desacralization of our every-day living space shall inevitably dominate us, that there is no escaping from this cultural tendencies. The author nonetheless puts forward a very precise remedies, that is, strategies of “not abandoning the trenches of values,” which are priceless from the universal viewpoint are have to be protected.

JACEK KURZĘPA

Les conditions d'un dialogue efficace avec les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui

Résumé

L'auteur évoque et décrit les habitudes numériques contemporaines des jeunes gens. Il les définit comme des natifs numériques (*digital natives*) qui durant la grande majorité de leur temps restent connectés à Internet. Par conséquent, on observe le recul et la déficience d'autres compétences communicationnelles ainsi que l'entrée dans le passage des dysfonctions liées au manque de compétences sociales suffisantes. Étant donné les déficits qui ne cessent de se creuser dans cette sphère, les jeunes gens compensent les déficiences susdites par une expression excessive sur Internet et dans la vie, ainsi que dans l'activité sociale. L'apparition de la multitude de stimulants du monde numérique fait qu'ils se perdent dans la vie réelle. Cela étant, il est nécessaire de trouver un moyen adéquat pour rétablir le contact avec eux, et puis ne pas le perdre. Outre la rivalité susmentionnée avec les technologies modernes, il est nécessaire d'entreprendre une lutte en pensant à la sauvegarde de valeurs et de bonnes mœurs. Sur Internet apparaissent de nouveaux phénomènes et dangers que l'auteur de l'article dévoile et exemplifie. Il range parmi eux la nonchalance et l'ignorance dans le domaine de la communication langagière, les mécanismes de « détester » et de dévaster la fragilité et l'intimité d'autrui ; enfin, il présente le phénomène de *sextos*. Chacun de ces phénomènes refoule avec une intensité remarquable les normes et les principes connus jusqu'à présent, non seulement en blesant et mutilant un individu, mais aussi en influençant la communauté qui est impuissante à l'égard d'un tel comportement. D'un côté, cela résulte des traits d'un monde désacralisé qui est hautain, querelleur et violent. De l'autre, en revanche, cela résulte de

la maladresse de ceux qui veulent sauvegarder l'« ancien ordre normatif », car il leur manque d'outils communicationnels compatibles et adéquats, ainsi que de compétences de les appliquer. On pourrait présumer que nous serons inévitablement dominés par la déshumanisation et la désacralisation de l'espace du quotidien et qu'il est impossible d'éviter ces tendances culturelles. Pourtant, l'auteur propose des moyens préventifs déterminés, des stratégies de « ne pas quitter les remparts de valeurs » qui, du point de vue universel, sont inestimables et il faut les protéger.

Mots clés: jeunes gens, dialogue, sextos, déshumanisation, relations humaines, désacralisation

JACEK KURZEPA

I condizionamenti del dialogo efficace con i giovani contemporanei

Sommario

L'autore cita e descrive l'habitus digitale contemporaneo dei giovani. Li ritrova come nativi digitali (digital natives) che rimangono on-line decisamente per la maggior parte del tempo. Di conseguenza hanno luogo l'abbandono e la minorazione delle altre capacità comunicative e l'entrata nel tunnel delle disfunzioni legate alla carenza di competenze sociali sufficienti. Insieme ai deficit che diventano sempre più profondi in questa sfera i giovani si compensano le carenze citate attraverso l'espressione eccessiva in rete come pure nella vita e nell'attività sui social media. La moltitudine di impulsi affluenti dal mondo digitale fa sì che si perdano nella vita reale, perciò è necessario trovare un modo adeguato per recuperare il contatto con loro, e poi non perderlo. Oltre alla competizione menzionata con le tecnologie moderne esiste la necessità di lottare avendo premura di mantenere i valori e i buoni costumi. Appaiono nuovi fenomeni e rischi in rete che l'autore dell'articolo rivela ed esemplifica. Vi annovera la noncuranza e l'ignoranza nel campo della comunicazione linguistica, i meccanismi di "hate speech" e di devastazione della delicatezza e dell'intimità, della privacy degli altri, infine presenta il fenomeno del sexting. Ognuno di questi fenomeni, con l'impeto di una cascata, subentra ai principi e alle norme finora applicati, non solo storpiando e ferendo l'individuo, ma anche agendo sulla comunità che è impotente di fronte ad un comportamento simile. Ciò risulta, da una parte, dalle caratteristiche del mondo desacralizzato che è borioso, litigioso e violento. Dall'altra, invece, dall'incapacità di coloro che vogliono salvaguardare il "vecchio ordine normativo" in quanto gli mancano gli strumenti di comunicazione adeguati, compatibili e le capacità di usarli. Si potrebbe assumere la premessa che l'abbruttimento e la desacralizzazione dello spazio della quotidianità ci domineranno in modo inevitabile, che non si possono più invertire queste tendenze culturali. L'autore tuttavia propone misure di rimedio definite, strategie di "non abbandono delle trincee dei valori" che sono inestimabili dal punto di vista universale e devono essere salvaguardati.

Parole chiave: giovani, dialogo, sexting, abbruttimento, relazioni interpersonali, desacralizzazione