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## Contents

<b>Piotr Prósinoski, Piotr Krzywdziński</b>	
Introduction.....	5

### ARTICLES AND STUDIES

<b>Lucyna Kopciewicz</b> (University of Gdansk)	
Cyborgisations: Prospects, Social Imaginaries, and Educational Projects .....	11
<b>Hussein Bougsiaa</b> (University of Gdansk)	
Teaching and Learning Context in the Augmented Reality Environment .....	23
<b>Radosław Kierepka</b> (Jagiellonian University)	
Video games and new media: on one of the methods to cooperate in creating a brand .....	33
<b>Piotr Prósinoski, Piotr Krzywdziński</b> (University of Gdansk)	
Video games and creativity: On the potential and narration of fear .....	45
<b>Paweł Olejniczak</b> (University of Gdansk)	
Educational content in non-educational video games .....	57
<b>Aleksandra Dymowska</b> (University of Gdansk)	
“Imagine the World...” – About Youth Hopelessness, Sleep Disorder and Alcohol Abuse .....	75
<b>Agnieszka Budnik</b> (District Special Education Complex in Wejherowo)	
Women’s hell – the contemporary picture in the media space of the right to abortion. The case of the enslavement or emancipation of women? .....	81
<b>Jakub Dąbrowski</b> (University of Warsaw)	
Dream-based diagnosis of the psyche .....	97
<b>Bartosz Wysocki</b> (University of Gdansk)	
The right to be forgotten – a right in the digital world .....	107

REVIEWS / REPORTS

**Lukasz Stankiewicz** (Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz)

American revolt against meritocracy. A review of Christopher Hayes's *Twilight of the Elites: America after Meritocracy*, William Deresiewicz's *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life*, and Thomas Frank's *Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People* ..... 121

## Introduction

The thirteenth volume of *Ars Educandi* is, in a way, a continuation of volume twelve. Both volumes were inspired by papers delivered during the first interdisciplinary scientific conference *Imagined Worlds and the Social Sciences*, which was held at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Gdansk, on 12 May 2015. The publications presented, being a result of the author's research, focus on the relationship between the development of new technologies and the spheres of the economy, culture, the media, and individual human experience. In the face of the dynamic development of new technologies, people increasingly balance at the borderline between two distinct, and yet strongly overlapping worlds: the real one and the digital one. What is produced at their border is a new quality of life actively drawing on the resources and ways of activity characteristic for both these platforms (Ostrowicki 2007). The ways in which we interact with the progressively complex technological systems, use the solutions they provide and learn owing to them, acquiring new skills and abilities, have already been discussed in *Ars Educandi* – volume ten (2013) devoted to educational technologies. The articles published therein focused on such topics as the controversies raised among theoreticians and practitioners of education by the radical cultural changes resulting from the dissemination of new communication technologies (Bougsiaa, Cackowska, Kopciwicz 2013: 25).

The issues discussed at that time have not lost any of their significance – on the contrary – they have become even more vital. We are convinced that the papers contained in the thirteenth volume can be considered a continuation of the discussion – not only on the role of pedagogical disciplines in the changing world, but also all the challenges posed to the social sciences in the face of the radical transformations of social reality and the evolving digital culture.

The volume starts with Prof. Lucyna Kopciwicz's article devoted to the cultural analysis of the cyborgisation phenomenon. The author shows how the discourse concerning the idea of progress translates into the expected results of technological development – in both its positive and negative aspects. She simultaneously indicates the strongly rooted, historical symbolic context of the idea of the cyborg as a product of the belief in the unavoidable, deterministic impact of scientific development.

The author of the second text – Hussein Bougsiaa – reflects on problems related to the process of learning in augmented reality, i.e. the real world enriched with the perspective and possibilities resulting from the use of information technology devices, which actively affect our perception of the world. The author shows

augmented reality as a natural intermediary space, a point of transition between our basic senses-based perception of the world and the whole virtual reality, and indicates the huge educational potential of this perspective as a tool facilitating educational processes.

The three subsequent texts concentrate on problems related to video games. Radosław Kierepka's paper is constructed around the notion of transmediality – it shows in what way video game developers use the various media and communication channels, create product brands extending beyond the rigid borders of a single medium, and lead parallel plot narrations through diverse forms of communication. Our (Piotr Prósiniowski and Piotr Krzywdziński's) text suggests that games are not only a form of entertainment, but can inspire their users to engage in different creative activities. The next researcher – Paweł Olejniczak – also tackles problems related to video games in the pedagogical context. He shows how games that aren't deliberately educational may transfer knowledge and abilities, build attitudes facilitating learning, and unintentionally support the didactic process.

Małgorzata Osowiecka and Izabella Gacka turn towards psychology. They indicate aesthetic experience – also in the context of electronic communication media – as a way of controlling emotional reactions.

Aleksandra Dymowska turns attention to the negative consequences of social changes. She discusses the problem of sleep disorders and addictions among today's youth. She enriches her analysis of the problem with the context of lifestyle changes related to access to new technologies.

Agnieszka Budnik discusses the issue of the construction of media discourse. On the basis of narration related to reproductive rights (particularly abortion), the author shows both the oppressive and the emancipatory potential of present day communication channels.

Jakub Dąbrowski refreshes problems of the analysis of dreams in the area of psychology. Analysing the previous theoretical and practical research achievements in this area, he aims at a synthesis of knowledge in the scope of the analysis and use of dreams in the work of psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists.

We may refer to the next text as a reflection at the border between the social sciences and legal studies. Bartosz Wysocki discusses the important topic of the right to anonymity and being forgotten in the context of the development of new media. He pays attention to the consequences of the ease and universality of access to information and the impact of the conditions on the way people function.

This volume is closed by Łukasz Stankiewicz's text *Amerykański bunt przeciwko merytokracji* [The American Rebellion Against Meritocracy] being a review of the books: *Twilight of the Elites: America after Meritocracy* by Christopher Hayes, *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life* by William Deresiewicz, and *Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People* by Thomas Frank.

We hope you will enjoy reading the texts. We are convinced that the works collected here are not only interesting from the scientific point of view, but also discuss a broad range of extremely important contemporary problems. We hope

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that the reflections contained herein will inspire further research and scientific initiatives aimed at a further exploration of the fascinating research field of technological development and its impact on social life in all of its aspects.

Piotr Prósiniowski  
Piotr Krzywdziński

### Literature

- Bougsiaa H., Cackowska M., Kopciwicz L., 2013, *Dzieci w kulturze cyfrowej* [Children in the Digital Culture], *Ars Educandi*, vol. 10.
- Ostrowicki M., 2007, *Inteligentne byty w elektronicznym realis. Spotkanie* [Intelligent Beings in Electronic Realis. A Meeting], [http://www.sideymyoo.art.pl/Inteligentne\\_byty\\_w\\_elektronicznym\\_realis.pdf](http://www.sideymyoo.art.pl/Inteligentne_byty_w_elektronicznym_realis.pdf) [accessed on 19.11.2016].





## ARTICLES AND STUDIES



Lucyna Kopciwicz  
University of Gdansk

## Cyborgisations: Prospects, Social Imaginaries, and Educational Projects<sup>1</sup>

This article aims at an analysis of the phenomena creating the contemporary processes of cyborgisation. These processes consist in an inevitable growth of phenomena that are hybrid, borderline, ambiguous, and hard to classify – inter-categorical, which is caused by the increasingly stronger, irreversible impact of present-day technologies on our daily life in almost all its dimensions. In this paper I shall present selected aspects of cyborgisation: the unavoidable relations between technological changes and social transformations (together with the discourses of advance and expectations of positive or negative transformations). I shall also analyse imaginaries concerning cyborgs – a sexualized sphere of fantasies on the power of technology that liberates or leads to destruction, as well as contemporary changes in this area initiated by critical trends in social thought. I shall finally discuss some dimensions of cyborgisation in educational references.

### Cyborgisation – localisation of the process on the map of discourses of technology

Reflection on education and socialisation in the context of technology is related – in a way automatically – to thinking about change: as if the inclusion of new objects and things into educational processes caused their immediate – almost magical – transformation and improvement. The reasons behind such hasty identifications include the discourse of progress, with its obvious component of technical development. Meditations pertaining to technology have always been related to the social. Technology has been an obvious – albeit most often disregarded or ignored by cultural and social researchers – pillar of social change: suffice it to mention Lenin's definition of socialism in which the essential change of the structure of the ruling power ("the rule of the soviets") was specifically connected

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<sup>1</sup> This text was written as a part of project NCN 2013/09/B/HS6/03091 entitled *M-rodzice i m-dzieci. Bezprzewodowa socjalizacja i uczenie się w kulturze cyfrowej* [M-parents and M-children. Wireless Socialisation and Learning in Digital Culture].

with modernization processes in the area of technology (electrification to be more precise). On the eve of the Bolshevik revolution at the turn of the 20th century, the economy flourished, experiencing integration on the global scale as a part of globalization processes. As a result of the technical revolution, which gave the world the telegraph, the telephone, electricity, and the development of the railway system and navigation, industry was growing dynamically, bringing about an increase in the wealth of societies (Lenin 2004). Owing to new means of communication, the 1912 Titanic disaster was an event everyone learnt about immediately. Intellectuals assumed that global communication would result in global public opinion, which in turn was to be the best guarantee of peace. When on 1 July 1913, an official time signal was broadcast to the world from the Eiffel Tower, Europe was experiencing a great intellectual confusion: the acceleration of life, technological changes leading to a redefinition of the basic notions such as time and space, industrialization causing the uprooting of great masses of people, and a radical change of the image of the world as a result of the revolution in mathematics and physics. In this context, Vladimir Lenin managed to introduce an innovative type of rule implemented via the party-machine: a collective, logical, disciplined structure, with the internal division of labour subordinated to a concrete goal and concrete tasks.

Similar social hopes were related to the dissemination of the telephone. In the 1940s, Marion May Dilts quoted General John J. Carty, who anticipated that "Some day we will build up a world telephone system making necessary to all peoples the use of a common language, or common understanding of languages, which will join all the people of the earth into one brotherhood" (Dilts 1941: 11). Therefore, beliefs on the revolutionary, equality-promoting or emancipatory social potential, have always been included in the sphere of technical changes (Caronia 2005: 98). The deterministic approach to technological development interweaved with social development has a long tradition and is strongly rooted in the 19th and 20th century thought. At the heart of the approach lies a conviction that things determine human attitudes, behaviours, ways in which people see and understand the world, and identities. Technological inventions were believed to be able to improve human existence. Nevertheless, the same deterministic discourse also generated technophobic beliefs – about a ruinous, dangerous or "devilish" impact of things (artefacts) on human life. This is because artefacts are perceived as artificial, non-authentic and inhuman aspects (objects produced on a mass scale in factories) of the reality, which in effect do harm to people (Caron, Caronia 2007).

The undoubtedly technophobic social behaviours resulting from the non-understanding of the essence of things include the reactions of viewers participating in the first film screenings. On 28 December 1895, films by the Lumière brothers were shown all day long in Grand Café in Paris. The first show included several films: *Baby's Breakfast*, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*, *The Sprinkler Sprinkled*, and *Arrival of a Train at a Station*. The last film proved to stir the most sensation: first, an empty platform was shown on the screen, followed by the moment of the train's arrival. During the first screenings, when confronted with the view of the locomotive reaching the station, the viewers were escaping from the place, shout-

ing in panic. However, the public soon started to demand new attractions and the fear vanished.

European thought is marked by the presence of technophobic approaches, which – in contrast to reactions resulting from ignorance – maintain more or less justified concerns related to the change of nature of the social relations. These approaches include romanticism and Luddism (both in their former and current versions). They are both clearly connected with the development of the 18th century capitalism and contrast the idealized concept of nature with machines. Nature played the role of a guarantor and source of moral conduct. It was also understood as an “internal voice” – a road to self-discovery, the development of individual originality and uniqueness. The romantic concept of nature contains special care for oneself as the basis for the identity-based design of the “self”. Here, nature is, however, clearly defined against the world (civilisation), as can be understood from works by Jean Jacques Rousseau – one of the most important representatives of romanticism. Luddism is a similar approach – it also maintained the romantic critique of industrialisation. Luddism as a social movement was established at the turn of the 19th century (the time of the industrial revolution) in Great Britain. Its members were representatives of free skilled workers, artisans, and weavers. Luddites protested against changes in lifestyles and work caused by the invention of weaving machines. The belief that machines are going to take work away from concrete social groups triggered hostility towards technology as expressed in the organised destruction of looms and machines (Dusek 2006).

The poor image of artefacts in the traditional thought of the West also resulted from critical approaches (Marxism and the Frankfurt school), which tracked down processes of alienation, reification and fetishisation being synonymous with non-authentic existence. These critical approaches assumed that the relation between people and objects is always substitutive, fetish-based or non-ethical; that what we should cover with greatest care are social relationships and real people (Olsen 2003). Critical approaches also contributed to the popularisation of the idea of textuality, discourse analysis, and the exploration of meanings and their social agency.

Nevertheless, the deterministic perception of the relation between technology and social life is by no means the only possible one. The paradigm which competes with it is called anti-determinism and its starting points are phenomenology and social constructivism. The gist of the paradigm is the assumption of the generation of culture – meanings and practices – in daily human life. We can, therefore, think of the social power originating from the very order of things. However, we need to take into account the order of meanings and the structure of senses, in which these artefacts function. Culture-creating processes – which also involve cultural manners in which objects are used, strategies, tactics and actions – are founded both on the specific cultural framework, and material resources, jointly creating the world of life (Olsen 2003). New materialism, which has been growing in popularity recently, stresses object studies, which refer to the world of life in its material dimension, but which have been neglected in cultural studies. It shows in what way things become domesticated in the human world in the existing structures

of meanings, how they co-create new scripts of behaviours and identities. What marks anti-determinism is the relational attitude as a part of which significant relations between people and artefacts are semantically analysed along with the cultural mechanisms of the introduction of objects into the social world (Caronia, Caron 2004), as well as the exploration of the sphere of the imaginary and ways of social cooperation between human and non-human actors.

### Cyborg imaginaries in symbolical order – culture and technological order

The figures, patterns, and symbols in which the condensed imagination and materiality work are an extremely important sphere regulating our daily ways of thinking about the technological order. This is because symbolic space generates changes, shaping their very possibility. The tradition of Western progress was very visibly connected with a specific symbolic spectrum – a reservoir of patterns and a backup facility for identities. Figures of monsters as imaginaries of the inhuman defined the borders of human community, acting for the benefit of its consolidation. Having a close look at the visions of cyborgs, we may explore the meanings that are or used to be attached to close relationships between people and technology, and determine what ideologies and visions of politics such materialisations of imagination serve. The cyborg as a product of a mix between body and machine is a synonym for a monstrosity, non-naturalness and natural-technical excess. It thus consolidates the separateness of the discourses of nature and technology. It should be pointed out that the figure of the cyborg in the European history of progress has changed considerably.

The imaginaries concerning the technology of the modernist industrialisation often focused on the topic of destruction – the power of technology, which in a peculiar way becomes autonomous and shows its power, announcing disobedience to people. When constructing similar representations, the makers of the 1920s cinema identified them with the destructive powers of the female body and the disastrous potential of the technological progress (Braidotti 2013). The indicated sources of destruction were materialised in the figures of women-robots (technological ones such as the *femme fatale*: as the Eve of the future or the mechanical Maria<sup>2</sup>). Therefore, the clearly sexualised and genderised technology seemed both fascinating and terrifying – equally liberating and at the same time able to distort the course of history.

The cyborg figure is also emblematic for the contemporary human relations with technology. The cyborg is a being which lifts the duality of the body and its technological support, and negates the division into the natural and the cultural. Grażyna Gajewska shows that the ambiguous status of the cyborg forces people

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<sup>2</sup> References to Fritz Lang's 1927 film *Metropolis* and its literary equivalent *The Future Eve* of 1922, written by August de Villiers de L'Isle-Adam.

to confront other imaginaries of themselves, and that it questions the consolidated beliefs on the mind, body, gender and identity. The author argues that the figure of the cyborg presents various possibilities such as the existence of eccentric shifts and normative precedents (Gajewska 2010: 290).

The contemporary cyborgisations have a relatively long history. In the 1960s, scientists working for NASA expressed their conviction that it is necessary to create human-mechanical hybrids that could work in the extremely difficult conditions of outer space. These self-controlling technical-organic systems were called cyborgs. Since those times, the name of a cyborg has also been applied to hybrids escaping clear-cut identifications, since the logic of their creation consists in introjection and absorption, which raises the barriers between the natural and the technical. This is because cybernetic bodies cannot be dismantled into organic and inorganic parts: the natural body and the technology that encapsulates it. In this sense, the cyborg is a new quality – an organic-technical unity. Hence, the project of cyborgisation fitted the tradition of scientific discoveries contesting the pillars of the former social order founded on the division between the spheres of nature and culture. It changed the organisation and imaginaries about man as much as Nicolaus Copernicus's, Charles Darwin's or Sigmund Freud's discoveries before it. Cyborgisation contains a fantasy of self-control, which became very important from the political point of view in the context of the so-called space race between the western and the eastern worlds. Therefore, cyborgisation determined a certain horizon of power – who controls the body, may keep the Earth and the space beyond it under control (Gajewska 2010: 23). When the military-scientific project of cyborgisation began to lose its political potential, cyborgs began to increasingly populate pop-cultural productions (such as the films *Terminator* and *RoboCop*).

Since the second half of the 1980s, the processes of cyborgisation have been reviewed from critical (feminist and postcolonial) standpoints. These verifications aim at saying farewell to the military entanglement of the figures of cyborgs and exploration of their non-military vital field of possibilities. What is at stake in this procedure, is ways of seeing the future and the political imagination in the context of new connections between the exact sciences, humanities, and ideologies. As Gajewska argues, cyborgs – hosts of the future – shall not be neutral. They are by necessity burdened with the compulsion of politicization and the invention of non-military motivations for human-technical immersions (Gajewska 2010: 37).

The pioneering work showing the necessity to explore the figures and processes of cyborgisation to the humanities was Donna Haraway's *A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s*. Its author turned attention to the politicalness of the figure, since – in her opinion – the way we imagine human-technical hybrids is closely connected with the manners of the organization of social life intermediated by highly advanced technologies (Haraway 1994).

*A Manifesto for Cyborgs* was published in 1985 and considerably contributed to the shaping of thinking about man in a posthumanistic perspective. According to Haraway, the cyborg challenges the ontological purity, questioning the existence

of the differences dividing the human and the animal, the organic and the inorganic, and the differences between the body and the machine. The author believes that the machines of the late 20th century have totally blurred the border between naturalness and artificialness, the mind and the body, self-development and external intervention, as well as many other dichotomies used to describe organisms and machines. According to Haraway, cyborgs are not subject to biopolitics, which significantly differentiates her approach from the Foucauldian way of understanding of the biological-ideological relation.

The figure of the cyborg simulates politics, which for Haraway means that it produces relations and tensions between fiction, ideologies and the exact sciences, which are focused on a constructive future rather than solely on the deconstruction of the past (Haraway 1994).

The author of *A Manifesto for Cyborgs* is connected with the socialist feminism and it is for this reason that she searches for an alternative tale about the cyborgs – one that is a utopian tale non-entangled in the structures of domination. However, she does not idealise the possibilities, being conscious of the many connections between technology and the most important contemporary discourses that the cyborg is an emblem of: militarism, globalism, capitalism, and patriarchalism. She is also aware that there is no escape from cyborgisation, and that for this reason the question of the survival in new – culturally and politically unfavourable – times is so significant. In 1985, *A Manifesto for Cyborgs* was without any doubt a revelatory description of the concept of the complex connections between people and technology. It was an important voice showing social, political and economic conditions of the development of contemporary identities in the environment in which the significance of technology has been growing. Thirty years after the first publication of *A Manifesto for Cyborgs*, the tasks of the analysis of modern technologies, watching who they serve and supporting such a way of their transformation that they serve the non-dominating – i.e. those who need them most – are still up to date. The observation of new human-technical hybrids and motivations accompanying their origin deepens the understanding of post-industrial reality. It is also worth adding that the figure of the cyborg opens up the space of thinking of alliances with subjects other than people – animals and machines – with a view to the extension of the boundaries of the definition of the common world and the practice of a radicalized version of democracy extended to include the non-human space.

### Cyborgisation of education – exemplifications

Today, the advantages of cyborgisation processes are described more often than their dangers. Similarly, reflection on the cyborgisation of education is related both to concerns connected with the exposure of children and youth to the dynamically developing technologies, and hopes that this group of learners will acquire new cultural competences indispensable for critical participation in the technologized society.



Intelligent technologies increasingly change the functioning of education. Becoming fully-fledged educational actors, they make learning a community and multimedia process that is connective, open and placeless. In this context, we should expect a considerable change of the role of the teacher – to become one of the moderators of the processes of the construction of learners' knowledge. The structure of the learning process and its infrastructure should become more important than the provided content. Perhaps intelligent technologies in the educational space will act as an *ignorant schoolmaster*, creating truly equal conditions for everyone. However, in a less optimistic scenario, they may create a perfect system of the monitoring of the course and effects of learning at the age of the increasing data saturation and the multiplication of supervisory procedures, deepening the existing social inequalities.

Mobile technologies, intelligent network equipment and wearable technologies have significantly invigorated the processes co-creating the cyborg model of education. Additionally, the intensification of cyborgisation processes takes place owing to the introduction of the following to the educational space:

- social media, video platforms, and text and picture messages as new learning spaces and techniques;
- intelligent network devices with the localisation function and devices sensitive to the context used in today's science;
- educational mixed applications – ones using real materials such as photographs, audio recordings, video recordings and the augmented reality technology;
- wearable technologies providing personalised data for further research;
- learning involving touchscreen devices and motion controllers (such as Kinect);
- learning connected with designing and producing things, referring to the 3D printing technology;
- gamification;
- educational design using holographic telepresence technologies (3DHT) such as virtual teachers, etc.

## Flipped classroom

One of the most important trends connected with educational changes is the concept of the flipped classroom (inverted classroom, reverse teaching). It is blended learning, in which the learning/teaching structure has been reversed owing to the embedding of educational processes in the contemporary technological environment, especially that of mobile technologies. Learners independently explore the educational content they are provided online (most often in the form of video material prepared by the teacher), taking video lessons at their own homes. At the same time, activity at school is based on exercises and is practical, as it refers to the strategy of problematisation – discussing and solving problems by learners with

the teacher's help. The teacher-learner relations are personalised, with tutoring being the dominant feature. The teacher not so much leads the process of the content provision and learning, as he/she is its coordinator, indicating valuable educational resources and materials, and making the learners aware of their own cognitive constructs. What is also important is the process of group learning during the lesson and cooperation between persons marked by varying levels of advancement. The undeniable success of the flipped classroom, as confirmed by educational research (a spectacular improvement of learning outcomes has been recorded, indicating the wonderfulness and simplicity of this strategy), consists not so much in a simple change of the place in which the content is provided (home instead of school), as the teacher-learner activity at school related to the delivered and watched (listened to) material (Bergmann, Sams 2012; Gerstein 2012; Lage, Platt, Treglia 2000). The basis for such a teaching is the audio-visualisation of knowledge, communication, and resignation from the teacher's control in the process of content absorption. Learners acquire full autonomy, come to school prepared, and the gist of the school learning lies in the learners' questions emerging during their independent coping with the material (Dylak 2013: 203). The flipped classroom may be called mobile teaching. It is free from the illusion of the permanence of the place ("the only good one") in which the knowledge is absorbed, engages various subjects (most often the learners' close social circle), and assumes an unrestrained flow of knowledge that is "situated" in many places, concerns various disciplines and topics, and is related to the existing technological infrastructure.

### Does the cyborgising education produce cyberchildren?

New technologies also change the space of present-day childhood studies. Today, it is strongly polarised and dominated by two hardly fortunate theoretical orientations: one marked by an alarmist spirit, amplifying the model of the "endangered childhood", and the second one, which a priori celebrates the model of emancipated, competent *cyberkids*. The said polarisation deprives researchers of a chance for a comprehensive exploration of the indisputable potentials of the digital culture and the entire range of reservations and limitations related to the children's participation in it.

In the context of the development of modern communication technologies and their potential impact on the children's population, it is the approach of Marc R. Prensky, the creator of software for children, educator-practitioner and pedagogical visionary, which is most often referred to. Prensky introduced the distinction *digital natives/digital immigrants* to the vocabulary of the social sciences to make oppositions between generations in terms of the degree of their domestication in the digital culture. His point of view has been almost uncritically adopted by social and educational researchers. Prensky defines the generation of digital natives through their birth and development in the digital era, indicating an anthropological difference radically separating the generation from that of their parents. Ac-

According to the researcher, the differences concern the sphere of cognition, specific construction of identity, and the valid models of social relations. The generation of digital natives

have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, video games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age [...]. Computer games, email, the Internet, cell phones and instant messaging are integral parts of their lives (Prensky 2012: 68).

In the cognitive sphere, Prensky stresses mainly the non-linearity of perceptive processes of the youngest generation and the phenomenon of multitasking – a simultaneous performance of many diverse activities. It is a result of the young people's daily immersion in the digital culture and the necessity to cope with the flood of information from various sources, provided by many communication channels. He also points to the importance of interactive processes (including the interactivity of media coverage) and the audio-visuality of knowledge. The author attributes social and educational value to the cognitive strategies of the digital natives, shaped by long-term network participation – which stimulates innovation, creativity, and originality. Therefore, participation in the digital world – according to the author – proportionally increases the cognitive possibilities of the youngest generation. This thesis leads the researcher to an optimistic assumption of the democratic access to knowledge and its egalitarian creation (everyone creates knowledge, everyone has a potentially full access to today's open information resources).

Prensky also believes that the openness and anonymity of the Internet changes many traditional models of social relations, in which analogue interactions (defined as hierarchized, conventionalized social contacts connected with the ascribed social roles and defined places) no longer count, for the benefit of a cloud structure – democratic, inclusive (participatory) and partnership-based. This attitude is subsequently shifted into the sphere of social relations taking place in “real life”, which encounters resistance and the barrier of non-understanding on the part of the older generation – the digital immigrants.

The author adopts similar assumptions when he describes the reconstructive identity potentials of the digital culture – the freedom of self-determination, experimenting with various versions of the “self” created and improved with the help of the available digital resources. In other words, every digital native has a certain image policy (manages his/her own image), creating numerous versions of their own “advertisements”.

Prensky's enthusiastic diagnoses are sometimes rejected in the socio-cultural aspect. Neil Postman, one of the best-known critics of technology, consistently sketches the picture of a technological inferno. According to him, technology dehumanises, addicts, destroys culture and authentic interpersonal communication, and facilitates the brutalization of life of the youngest generations, exposing children to premature contact with much undesirable content of contemporary culture (pornographic or paedophile content, cyberbullying, hate speech, etc.).

Postman describes digital culture solely in terms of destabilization and destruction (Postman 1994). His reflections are, however, worth attention, since they focus on the hardly discussed aspects of the youngest generation's digital participation. Contrary to the belief on the democratic (equality) potential of digital culture, the author also turns attention to the segregation processes present in mass media (such as the very clear gender segregation). These processes considerably consolidate stereotypization and traditional identities, instead of questioning them.

It seems that neither the model of emancipated cyberchildren nor the model of child-monsters, victims of digital culture, are utterly accurate. This is because both groups of theories are founded on the assumption that the modern technology itself is agential and produces inevitable – oppressive or liberating – changes as a result of its broad availability (Buckingham 2009). Both these approaches are also related to a romantic concept of childhood in its pessimistic (an innocent, helpless child requiring care and protection) or optimistic (a creative, naturally innovative and competent child) version. Due to the overlapping of both groups of assumptions, children in contact with digital culture are essentialistically defined as alien *cyberchildren* with distinct species traits. We must not focus solely on the idea of the agency of technology as such. What needs to be taken into account primarily is the context of its development and concrete practices of its application, as well as the social spaces in which technology appears (Buckingham 2009).

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## Summary

### *Cyborgization: Prospects, Social Imaginaries and Educational Projects*

In this article I discuss the concept of cyborgisation at the level of social prospects, social imaginaries and educational projects. The ways in which this concept has emerged are discussed to highlight the type of reflection which continues to inform the discourses on contemporary technologies and their impact on society and education. The most important part of the paper focuses on emerging technologies and their educational impact as well as on debates about the cyberchildren generation.

## Keywords

cyborgisation, technology, social change, education, cyberchildren



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## Teaching and Learning Context in the Augmented Reality Environment<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

#### What is Augmented reality (AR)?

Augmented reality is a technology that lays computer-generated virtual imagery on top of a live direct or indirect real-world environment in real time. This disruptive technology is growing at a significant pace due to its new and innovative nature (Dingli, Seychell 2015). Currently, AR is mostly being used for advertising and commercial purposes, and in the entertainment, medical and educational fields (Wu *et al.* 2013). AR's usefulness in educational contexts has driven the focus of the creation by Jun Lee and Marylee Ang-Sadecki's Google Site, Augmented Reality 101 (AR 101), as educators are recognizing its numerous benefits to teaching and learning (Lee *et al.* 2012). AR enhances reality, presenting content in 3D perspectives. It promotes collaboration and strengthens the sense of presence, immediacy, and immersion in learning. Bridging formal and informal learning, AR also enables students to visualize the invisible. This increases motivation and student engagement as it offers opportunities for just-in-time learning and makes connections to real-world applications. It also enables learners to better understand complex concepts. As a result, this technology holds the possibility for a wider adoption by educators (Blagg 2009).

#### What is the significance of AR to teaching and learning?

AR has begun to show promise in helping students learn more effectively (Billinghurst, Duenser 2012). Through the creation of authentic learning environments, AR helps increase knowledge retention and memorization (Martin *et al.* 2011). In addition, AR supports the understanding of complex tasks by combining real and virtual information. AR allows learners to interact with digital content by allowing participants to manipulate images (Billinghurst, Duenser 2012). This facilitates skill acquisition more effectively, and leads to an increase in the student excitement with technology (Billinghurst, Duenser 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> The article is part of the project NCN 2013/09/B/HS6/03091 *M-rodzice i m-dzieci. Bezprzewodowa socjalizacja i uczenie się w kulturze cyfrowej* [M-parents and M-children. Wireless Socialisation and Learning in the Digital World].

AR enhances student motivation, involvement and engagement. This results in increased student understanding of spatial and temporal concepts (Billinghurst, Duenser 2012; Martin *et al.* 2011), as AR enables learners to delve more deeply into topics. A visual map of the benefits of AR was created, and the idea of AR in teaching and learning was highlighted in the New Media Consortium's Horizon Report for K-12 in 2012.

There are two forms of AR currently available to educators: 1. location-aware and 2. vision-based. Location-aware AR presents digital media to learners as they move through a physical area with a GPS-enabled smartphone or similar mobile device. The media (i.e., text, graphics, audio, video, 3D models) augment the physical environment with narrative, navigation, and/or academic information relevant to the location. In contrast, vision-based AR presents digital media to learners after they point the camera in their mobile device at an object (e.g., QR code, 2D target). The following scenario provides a contextualized example of both forms of AR: as the 7th grade life science student passes by an oak tree in her school playground, software-leveraging GPS plays a video on his/her smartphone describing the various habitats and animals that are found near the tree (location-aware). At the end of the video, the student is prompted to point his/her phone's video camera at a placard at the base of the tree, which triggers a three-dimensional model illustrating the anatomical structure of the oak (vision based).

The potential power of AR as a learning tool is its ability "to enable students to see the world around them in new ways and engage with realistic issues in a context with which the students are already connected" (Klopfer, Sheldon 2010). These two forms of AR (i.e., location-aware and vision-based) leverage several smartphone capabilities (i.e., GPS, camera, object recognition and tracking) to create "immersive" learning experiences within the physical environment, providing educators with a novel and potentially transformative tool for teaching and learning (Azuma 1997; Klopfer *et al.* 2009). Immersion is the subjective impression that one is participating in a comprehensive, realistic experience. Interactive media now enable various degrees of digital immersion. The more a virtual immersive experience is based on design strategies that combine actionable, symbolic, and sensory factors, the greater the participant's suspension of disbelief that she or he is "inside" a digitally enhanced setting. Studies have shown that immersion in a digital environment can enhance education in at least three ways: by allowing multiple perspectives, situated learning, and transfer.

Furthermore, these two forms of AR both leverage the affordance of context sensitivity, which enables the mobile device to "know" where it is in the physical world and to present digital content to the user that is relevant to that location (Klopfer, Squire 2003). This review will primarily focus on location-aware AR played outdoors in the physical environment; while vision-based AR holds enormous potential for educators, there are few current studies on this version of AR. Research on related immersive media suggests ways in which vision-based AR could be powerful. For example, using the medium of sensorial immersive virtual reality, Project Science Space contrasted egocentric rather than exocentric frames



of reference. The “exocentric” frame of reference provides a view of an object, space, or phenomenon from the outside, while the “egocentric” frame of reference provides a view from within the object, space, or phenomenon. The exocentric and the egocentric perspectives were found to have different strengths for learning, and the “bicentric” perspective alternating between the egocentric and exocentric views was shown to be particularly powerful (Dunleavy, Dede, Mitchell 2009).

## Theoretical foundation for AR

The assertion that AR could provide enhanced learning experiences is grounded in two interdependent theoretical frameworks: 1. the situated learning theory and 2. the constructivist learning theory.

The situated learning theory posits that all learning takes place within a specific context and the quality of the learning is a result of interactions among the people, places, objects, processes, and culture within and relative to that given context (Brown, Collins, Duguid 1989). Within these contexts, learning is a co-constructed, participatory process in which all learners are “transformed through their actions and relations in the world” (Brown, Collins, Duguid 1989: 37). Situated learning builds upon and extends other learning theories such as social learning theory and social development theory, which posit that the level of learning is dependent upon the quality of the social interaction within the learning context (Bandura 1977; Vygotsky 1978).

Situated learning through immersive interfaces is important in part because of the crucial issue of transfer (Dede 2009). Transfer is defined as the application of knowledge learned in one situation to another situation and is demonstrated if instruction on a learning task leads to improved performance on a transfer task, ideally a skilled performance in a real-world setting (Mestre 2002). Researchers differentiate between two ways of measuring transfer: sequestered problem-solving and preparations for future learning (Schwartz, Sears, Bransford 2005). Sequestered problem-solving tends to focus on direct applications that do not provide an opportunity for students to utilize resources in their environment (as they would in the real world); standardized tests are an example of this. Giving students presentational instruction that demonstrates solving standard problems, then testing their ability to solve similar problems, involves near-transfer: applying the knowledge learned in a situation to a similar context with somewhat different surface features.

When evaluation is based on the success of learning as a preparation for future learning, researchers measure transfer by focusing on extended performances where students “learn how to learn” in a rich environment and then solve related problems in real-world contexts. With conventional instruction and problem solving, attaining preparation for future learning requires far-transfer: applying the knowledge learned in a situation to a quite different context whose underlying semantics are associated, but distinct (Perkins, Salomon 1992). One of the major criticisms of instruction today is the low rate of far transfer generated by presentational instruction.

Even students who excel in educational settings often are unable to apply what they have learned to similar real-world contexts.

The potential advantage of immersive interfaces for situated learning is that their simulation of real-world problems and contexts means that students must attain only near-transfer to achieve preparation for future learning. Flight and surgical simulators demonstrate the near-transfer of psychomotor skills from digital simulations to real-world settings; research on the extent to which AR can foster transfer is an important frontier for the field (Gallagher, O'Sullivan 2012; Hays *et al.* 1992).

Constructivist/interpretivist theories of learning assume that meaning is imposed by the individual rather than existing in the world independently (Dede 2009). People construct new knowledge and understandings based on what they already know and believe, which is shaped by their developmental level, their prior experiences, and their socio-cultural background and context (Bruner 1966; Vygotsky 1978). Knowledge is embedded in the setting in which it is used: learning involves mastering authentic tasks in meaningful, realistic situations (Lave, Wenger 1991). Learners build their personal interpretations of reality based on experiences and interactions with others, creating novel and situation specific understandings. Instructional design approaches based on constructivist theories include anchored instruction, case-based learning (Kolodner 2001), cognitive flexibility theory (Spiro *et al.* 1991), collaborative learning (Barron 2000), micro worlds and simulations (White 1993), mind tools (Jonassen 2005), and situated learning in communities of practice (Lave, Wenger 1991).

Instruction can foster learning by providing rich, loosely structured experiences and guidance (such as apprenticeships, coaching, and mentoring) that encourage meaning making without imposing a fixed set of knowledge and skills (Lave, Wenger 1991).

Constructivist learning theory outlines five conditions most likely to enhance learning:

1. embed learning within relevant environments;
2. make social negotiation integral to the learning experience;
3. provide multiple perspectives and multiple modes of representation;
4. provide self-directed and active learning opportunities;
5. support and facilitate meta-cognitive strategies within the experience (Cunningham 1992; Driscoll 2000; Piaget 1969; Vygotsky 1978).

As a cognitive tool or pedagogical approach, AR aligns well with situated and constructivist learning theory as it positions the learner within a real-world physical and social context, while guiding, scaffolding and facilitating participatory and meta-cognitive learning processes such as authentic inquiry, active observation, peer coaching, reciprocal teaching and legitimate peripheral participation with multiple modes of representation (Dunleavy, Dede, Mitchell 2009).

Augmented reality is poised to transform profoundly education as we know it. The capacity to overlay rich media onto the real world for viewing through web-enabled devices such as phones and tablet devices means that information can be made available to students at the exact time and place of need. This has

the potential to reduce cognitive overload by providing students with “perfectly situated scaffolding”, as well as enabling learning in a range of other ways. This article reviews uses of AR both in mainstream society and in education, and discusses the pedagogical potentials afforded by the technology. Based on the prevalence of information delivery uses of AR in education, I argue the merit of having students design AR experiences in order to develop their higher order thinking capabilities. A case study of “learning by design” using AR in high school visual art is presented, where samples of student work and their feedback is indicating that the approach results in high levels of independent thinking, creativity and critical analysis. The article concludes by establishing an outlook for AR and setting a research agenda going forward.

AR is likely to be a new form of demonstration where there is no need to have any physical model presented, hence it should be available for students at home (only a printed AR marker, a webcam and a computer with internet connection are required), and AR books, AR development and logical games are just about to appear in education. The usage of AR technology could be inserted in many subjects i.e., maths, on the lessons about geometry, or with 3D representations of cells in biology, in chemistry displaying molecular structure, or in PE where a team sport simulation can be established. Additionally, any subject can be more colourful, more interesting and interactive. Furthermore, education may profit from AR development or logical games. In computer science lessons, students can familiarize themselves with the background of AR and they can create their own AR projects. For instance, beginners can create their own 3D pop-up books at ZooBurst. After having registered, storytellers can create their own world in which their stories can come to life. An AR marker can be assigned to the virtual book that helps the physical book come “alive”. On the next level of the use of AR, students may construct a 3D model with 3D editing tools and an AR marker accompanied by their own AR source codes.

In the article I introduced the relevance of AR and presented how the technology works, showing some examples of popular products and the direction where it is heading. I described this area, explaining the different modules of the AR portal and their use. I Demonstrated some of the applications, which were elaborated on in an experiment, in university education. My present findings so far have convinced me that AR technology could be a very good practical extension to textbooks and exercise; they give virtual hands on experiences to understand better the models within a learning context.

While AR succeeds as a motivational hook, gains in learning are demonstrated consistently less. Successful use of new technologies depends on matching technologies with the learning outcomes it best supports. Because of the visual-spatial nature of 3D AR, motor skill learning in particular can be enhanced, through the direct manipulation of objects that mimic real conditions. For intellectual skills, learning gains are attributable to quality engagement, rather than the AR itself. Additionally, a clear articulation of institutional support for digital learning increases the likelihood of successful implementation.

The convergence of so many technologies is creating new ways of interacting and engaging with the world, leading to new ways of thinking. It could be we have not yet discovered the best application of these new tools for enhancing learning. Perhaps there are as-yet unmeasured indicators that would support their continued use and investment in education.

We are in the era where connecting the senses of the audio, visual and touch zones in our brains is necessary to enhance the way our cognitive development is constructed as well as our education system to get the correct cognitive outcome. The time is exactly right to start looking into our education system the same way we do with our brains – involving and connecting the sense of specific teaching with modern learning, together with the sense of cognitive gaming, to augment the education to build a new module of information, and to cope with the huge and extremely fast update of information in this age of technology.

## Conclusions and future directions

The article describes augmented reality applications in the field of education as a teaching and learning enhancement. AR is an applied technology of many cross-cutting areas. Meanwhile, it can be certainly used in many fields. Here, I have focused mainly on education because the needs of AR applications and education are partly similar, but for exhibition, we could discuss augmented reality applications in museums, cultural heritage relics and commercial showcases. These could provide extra and extensive information through a friendly and intuitive way. Some typical instances could be introduced in the details. Nevertheless for education, I would firstly classify this area into the two fields of personal devices and multiuser installations. Then, AR applications in video game players, handheld game consoles, and mobile phone are carefully discussed. Lastly, multiuser theme park attractions with augmented reality are introduced, like creative interactive 3D live.

From the discussions above, we can easily find that AR is suitable for education, entertainment and exhibition. It gives a better immersion feel and appealing form by combining the real and virtual worlds together. These are meeting the needs of those fields. AR in new product releases and live learning provides an interesting and unforgettable amount of information or experience of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, AR in these fields has different requirements. AR in education should be more playable, while in an exhibition it should focus on its functions and convenient use for users.

Therefore, when we develop an AR education system, we should pay more attention to its design and plan first on its playability, then the vivid mixed reality view rendering. On the other side, actual and useful function should be considered firstly for its applications in education. Lastly, user survey is needed for its massive use for the students and educators. Nowadays, many applications are emerging on the online stores, with mobile technology as a personal device, its computing ability and display indeed inspire lots of imagination, and bring a bright future

of augmented reality applications in education, entertainment and exhibition for students, educators and the public.

## Vision

Envisioning the future, we could see education delivery happening in non-traditional spaces outside the regular school day as the learners' devices engage the learners in problem solving activities customized to their demonstrated levels of proficiency. The activities will be tied to their current activity in their current location. Teachers will not deliver lessons, but will coordinate learning. Skill development will focus less on specific content, and more on process and problem solving. In a time when everything you might ever want to know is instantly accessible, there is a need to rethink the focus of education (Warchol 2015).

Imagine a twelve year old girl in the back seat on a family trip looking out the Google glass window. Content delivery systems identify a gap in her content learning from a geography activity and as the family travels it begins to label landforms. She accesses an AR model of the terrain outside and using her book as a target image, she views the surrounding terrain from all sides in three dimensions. She completes the quiz on her learning group's learning management system and receives a badge of achievement on her digital backpack.

Her younger brother is struggling with perspective in art so his window creates a vanishing point grid aligned with the scene outside. Coming to an understanding, he uses his mobile device to sketch out a picture using perspective and sends it to his learning cohort. Within a few minutes, he receives some responses congratulating him on his progress along with some pictures his peers drew.

The convergence of so many technologies into a unified system of information sharing enables a greater, deeper understanding of our world. The fact that these are systems integrated increasingly into our sensory experiences brings us closer to Ray Kurzweil's *Singularity*, the complete integration of the human organism with digital communication: one of the things our grandchildren will find quaintest about us is that we distinguish the digital from the real (Kurzweil 2005).

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### Summary

The article presents Augmented Reality (AR) as a step between reality and virtual reality for the benefit of education. After some introductory examples of where AR is heading, the technology itself will be explained. Then, I describe the modules of the AR that are developed and how it can be used in university courses and activities.

AR is the mid-point on a continuum between the real physical world around us and the virtual digital world online superimposing information on our sensory experiences as we move through time and space. Viewing physical objects through a mobile's camera, AR uses image recognition, geo-location, the device's accelerometer, and online databases to provide information relevant in time and space to the user. Research continues into different interaction methods and display possibilities making engagement with online data more natural and intuitive. The article explores current research in AR and associated technologies in order to understand possibilities for learners today and in the future.

This literature review focuses on AR for learning that utilizes mobile, context-aware technologies (e.g., smartphones, tablets), which enable participants to interact with digital information embedded within the physical environment. Summarizing research findings about AR in formal and informal learning environments (i.e., schools, universities, museums, parks, zoos, etc.), emphasis is placed on the affordances and limitations associated with AR as it relates to teaching, learning, and instructional design. As a cognitive tool and pedagogical approach, AR is primarily aligned with situated and constructivist learning theory, as it positions the learner within a real-world physical and social context while guiding, scaffolding and facilitating participatory and meta-cognitive learning processes such as authentic inquiry, active observation, peer coaching, reciprocal teaching and legitimate peripheral participation with multiple modes of representation.

### Keywords

teaching, learning, augmented reality, technology





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## Video games and new media: on one of the methods to cooperate in creating a brand

Although the video game market is one of the most dynamically growing markets in the world (in 2015, it recorded an income of 82.4 billion USD with an 8.9% increase in relation to the previous year [Geotrek S.A. 2016]), many people unrelated whatsoever to market or multimedia research still perceive games as an ordinary form of entertainment, functioning independently of the media market and having no impact on it.

On a daily basis, we can easily point out people who, despite being users of new media, play video games very rarely or do not play them at all – they would not call themselves players. And although video games are the same mass medium as the press, film or television, they continue to be placed in the position of “teen-age entertainment”.

Even many media researchers seem not to notice the role video games play today. It is all the more strange as games left game parlours years ago and are available to almost every user of the new media. While reading the press, watching television, using cell phones or browsing through social media, we may spot advertisements or even entire applications enabling one to play a more or less demanding game. Video games are therefore not only a medium in their own right, but they also affect the development of other media.

### Changes in forms of interpersonal communication

In the Polish language, the word “medium” and its plural form – “media” – has many meanings and is used in various terminologies. In colloquial understanding, media are means designed for communication – in particular on a mass scale. Therefore, we refer as media to the radio, television, press, film, photography, music, internet portals and almost all their offshoots (Pisarek 2008: 79). However, the above media emerged in human life relatively recently, while interpersonal communication has existed almost since the very beginning of human existence. Initially, communication was only based on a face-to-face contact – first, using non-verbal signals. Only later, did the development of common tongues enrich

the primitive forms of communication and allowed interpersonal communication to flourish (Dobek-Ostrowska 2006: 71). After the appearance of writing – first the pictographic, and then the phonetic script – communication took on another meaning. Writing was durable, and the written form prevented messages from being distorted or forgotten (for example by the messenger). The invention of print significantly extended the circle of recipients of the written word. These three symbols of communication (speech, writing, and print) are called revolutionary, but this is a very special kind of revolution. This is because it does not destroy the previous solutions, and increases the reach of the particular media, i.e. improves them further (Pisarek 2008: 87).

At the beginning of the 17th century, the first weeklies appeared, which developed mass communication. The nature of this new model – in contrast to *face to face* relations – is indirect: between the provider and the recipient there is an intermediary in the form of a mass medium. The harnessing of electricity allowed the development of subsequent media – Samuel Morse's telegraph and Alexander Bell's telephone. The beginning of the 20th century witnessed the broadcast of the first radio programme, and the first television transmission followed in 1929 (Bajka 2008: 195 and further). The fast development of television was strongly hampered by the outbreak of the Second World War.

The cold war period and the launch of a sputnik by the Soviet Union forced the Americans to invent a new form of communication. In the 1960s, Paul Baran presented a concept of communication between computers. Its virtue lay in the fact that the destruction of a single computer did not break the functioning of the entire network. By 1980, the network (called the ARPANET) already consisted of more than four hundred servers, while in 1983, the army provided the ARPANET to civilians, leaving a part of it for its own purposes. Since 1990, ARPANET has been existing as the internet. Network communication is a type of interpersonal communication whose participants have no physical contact. It combines the features of direct interpersonal and mass indirect communication (Dobek-Ostrowska 2006: 76), since just like in direct communication, it involves concrete (most often two) persons. However, feedback is delayed, and the very process of communication requires the presence of an intermediary (a medium), such as a phone or the internet. The latter enables a much broader communication – it may take place on a *one-to-one*, *one-to-many*, or *many-to-many* basis, with the users being able to talk and listen in turn (Jakubowicz 2007: 120).

## Transmedia storytelling

Transmediality or transmedia storytelling is a relatively new concept, used for the first time by Henry Jenkins in his book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* in 2006. Its assumptions and the conditions in which it takes place emerged in public debates as early as in 1999 on the occasion of the premiere of

the film *Blair Witch Project* (Jenkins 2006: 101). However, if we have a closer look at what transmedia storytelling is, we will be able to easily provide examples dating back even to before 1980.

The discussion on the transmedia product began after the first showing of *Blair Witch Project*, which became a great phenomenon. Its budget amounted to 60,000 USD, while the profits reached 240 million USD (IMDb 2016). This has happened, since the perception of *Blair Witch Project* solely as a film prevents us from seeing something much larger (Jenkins 2006: 101). As early as a year before the premiere, the producers carried out several activities aimed at an authentication of the film in the eyes of the viewers. First, a website was launched with the legend of the witch of Burkittsville (the current name of Blair town). The film itself was supposedly an amateur recording made by three students following the legend of the Blair witch – they died, leaving behind only the filmed material. The production was made in such a way as to convince the audience that what the creators invented before the premiere of the film, was true. The result exceeded the wildest expectations of the film's authors. In an interview with Henry Jenkins, director Eduardo Sánchez said something that could be considered the gist of a transmedia product:

[...] if you give people enough stuff to explore, they will explore. Not everyone but some of them will. The people who do explore and take advantage of the whole world will forever be your fans, will give you an energy you can't buy through advertising.... It's this web of information that is laid out in a way that keeps people interested and keeps people working for it. If people have to work for something they devote more time to it. And they give it more emotional value. (Jenkins 2006: 102).

Similar solutions were used to promote the film *Artificial Intelligence: AI* (Jenkins 2006: 123–124). An online game – *The Beast* – was created and its successful conclusion enabled one to learn the three main secrets of the production. As a part of the game, more than 4,000 messages were disseminated through several media devices such as websites, phones, faxes and e-mail. The puzzles were not banal – the participants had to complete such tasks as translation from the German and Japanese languages, the decryption of Morse code and Enigma and many other things (Jenkins 2006: 124). Fans quickly created a group, sharing their results and findings. It was assumed that the puzzles would be solved within three months – actually, all of them were solved already on the very first day. The combination of the powers of 7,000 users brought about unexpected results (Jenkins 2006: 124).

Inseparably connected with transmedia storytelling is the notion of the culture of participation, which consists in the diverse use of the created brand (Filiciak 2006: 177). It is perhaps easiest to picture the above through the example of the film industry. After the premiere of a given film, we often see various references, such as fan projects or parodies. Gadgets appear in shops. On the one hand, these include ones that are close to the spirit of the original, such as figurines of the

protagonists or vehicles. On the other hand, gadgets unrelated to the production at first glimpse, including backpacks or beer openers with scenes from the film, begin to mushroom. This is because the creators assume that – apart from the huge marketing campaign in the media – consumers can be flooded with gadgets and other products directly related to the brand. Apart from the obvious assets from the marketing point of view, the culture of participation prevents brands from dying. The sixth part of *Star Wars – Return of the Jedi* – was released in 1983, while the first part of the new trilogy – *The Phantom Menace* – in 1999. During the intervening sixteen years, consumers could become bored with *Star Wars*, forget about them and recall them anew only on the occasion of the premiere of *The Phantom Menace*. This has not been so, since the original novels, comic books, music, etc. produced in the meantime, generated profits, while maintaining brand awareness among the consumers (Filiciak 2006: 144).

Following this direction, Henry Jenkins identified several elements which determine the existence of a transmedia product:

- World building: both from scratch and as enrichment of the existing worlds. It is one of the most important features, since the world building ability provides a story with sense;
- seriality – consists in dividing the story into parts and disseminating them to different media. According to Jenkins, the ideal form of the transmedia product exists when we allow every part to develop in the sphere that is best for it. In such a way, the story is introduced for example in a book, and is then developed in games, comic books, and films (Filiciak 2006: 111);
- subjectivity – individual discovery of the world by every recipient. Recipients expect a new part of a given product to shed a new light on the presented story. If this is so, consumers will strengthen their bond with the brand. Failing that, an entirely different result may take place;
- reproduction – a feature allowing one to participate in the story. Examples include fan fictions taking place in a given universe or modifications created by players.

### Transmedia storytelling and video games

How does all this relate to video games? Are they able to – just like films – create a strong transmedia brand? Definitely so. Suffice it to recall – what I believe is a flagship example – the phenomenon of the *Tomb Raider* brand. The beginnings of the series go back to 1994, when an idea was born to develop “a new adventure game with shooting and puzzles” (Mańkowski 2010: 243). Two years later – before the game was completed – it was presented during the European Computer Trade Show in London. The three-dimensional world and the third person view were basically nothing new, while Lara herself had rather cubical

shapes and was hardly full of sex-appeal. However, there was a trick to the presentation of the game. The *Tomb Raider* stand included a motorbike with a model dressed in latex clothing, with her hair braided in a plait. Every few moments, she would get off the bike to have a photo with the show's guests. The mascots and robots present at the show could not compete with a live model, whose photos soon showered the industry press. In 1996, the game was premiered. Among her assets, mentioned were the music, graphic design, original plot, and, above all, the main protagonist. That was the beginning of the cult of Lara Croft. Players started to ask about Lara's past, her family, and even personal data such as her birthdate. Eidos, which took over Core Design (*Tomb Raider's* developers) before the premiere, seized an opportunity and created Lara's official biography. Interestingly, the protagonist appealed not only to men's tastes. Girls wanted to be just like her – strong, wise, and independent. Lara's fanclubs started to be founded, followed by websites where girl fans presented their photos dressed up as the female game protagonist (*Historia naj słynniejszej bohaterki gier. 10 lat z Larą Croft* [The Story of the Most Famous Female Game Protagonist. 10 Years with Lara Croft] 2006: 44).

The authors of the game did not slacken in their efforts to produce subsequent parts of Lara Croft's adventures. The second part of the game, issued in 1997, was as successful as part one, but on the occasion of the release of part three (1998), the fans' mood dropped slightly. Many players decided that in comparison to the previous part, too little was changed. The subsequent fourth part (released in 1999) showed that the authors treated the fan's criticism seriously. It was intended as the last part of the series, since the game ends with an animation showing Lara dying under a tumbling pyramid. It could have been a successful ending to the story if it was not for the fact that a year later *Tomb Raider V: Chronicles* was published. The fifth part of the cycle was based on recollections of Lara's dear ones, who gathered at her funeral. Hence, players participated in several retrospections. This time, the reviews by players and industry journalists were not that positive, so the developers gave themselves more time to create yet another part. Three years later, in 2003, the sixth part of the cycle reached the shops – it was called *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness* and failed to make a good impression. The number of errors effectively prevented players from enjoying the game. Voices announcing the fall of the series were increasingly heard.

In 2004, Eidos entrusted the production of the game to the US studio called Crystal Dynamics. Two years later, part seven – *Tomb Raider: Legend* – saw its premiere. The game had great reviews, with critics praising not only the fantastic graphic design, but also the animation and interesting plot. The series experienced a revival. 2006 was also the tenth anniversary of the release of the first part of Lara Croft's adventures. To mark the occasion, a refreshed version of part one was published. In 2008, a direct continuation of part seven of the series was launched – it was entitled *Tomb Raider: Underworld*. Sadly, the game included many errors, which affected the reviews. Nevertheless, it still scored 7–8/10.

Table 1. Mean scores of the games from the *Tomb Raider* series (PC) on the 1–10 scale in the most popular game-reviewing portals

<i>Tomb Raider</i> games	Portal			
	Meristation.com	IGN.com	GameSpot.com	Gry-online.pl
<i>Tomb Raider I</i>	9.4	9.1	8.5	9.0
<i>Tomb Raider II</i>	9.2	8.1	8.2	8.6
<i>Tomb Raider III</i>	9.3	7.7	6.9	8.3
<i>Tomb Raider IV: The Last Revelation</i>	8.5	7.0	7.4	8.4
<i>Tomb Raider V: Chronicles</i>	7.9	6.3	6.3	6.4
<i>Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness</i>	5.6	5.3	6.1	6.4
<i>Tomb Raider: Legend</i>	8.2	8.2	7.8	8.5
<i>Tomb Raider: Anniversary</i>	9.1	8.0	8.0	8.2
<i>Tomb Raider: Underworld</i>	8.1	8.0	–	8.2

Source: author's own research

In 2009, the Japanese company Square Enix purchased Eidos Interactive together with the rights to *Tomb Raider*. The future of the series was put into question, but finally the new brand owners announced the production of a new game in the cycle. However, the creators believed that the Lara thread was overloaded and decided to entirely resign from the heritage of the series (Kono 2010). Darrell Gallagher, the studio head, said: “Forget everything you knew about *Tomb Raider*” (Robinson 2010). 2013 witnessed the launch of a totally new *Tomb Raider* game. Although much awaited, the game was shrouded in doubts. After all, instead of a brave acrobat with a couple of guns in her hands, we were given a born and bred girl, who together with her friends was stranded on an island on the Sea of Japan. We witnessed a frightened girl become, as a result of various events, a seasoned woman. The game was very warmly received and the development of its sequel was soon announced. *Rise of Tomb Raider* was launched on 10 November 2015 to be played on Xbox One and soon scored very good reviews.

The *Tomb Raider* series is now twenty years old. As described above, it experienced both ups and (very painful) downs. Each time, however, the release of a new game in the series caused a huge excitement among the players. This is because *Tomb Raider* is not just a game series, and Lara Croft herself has long ago ceased to be just a game protagonist. Finally, Lara was noticed by Hollywood. In 2001, the film *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* with Angelina Jolie playing the main role, was premiered. However, the production failed to delight either critics or Lara's fans (Rotten Tomatoes 2016). Still, this does not change the fact that despite unfavourable reviews, the film earned almost three times its budget (The Numbers 2016a). In 2003, part two of the film, subtitled *The Cradle of Life*, reached the cine-



mas. Again, it was not a top quality film and it earned “only” 35 million USD (The Numbers 2016b).

Several writers decided to write a book to shed some light on the events that took place between the particular parts of the game. We first witnessed the publication of Mike Resnick’s book *The Amulet of Power* discussing the adventures that happened between the games *The Last Revelation* and *The Angel of Darkness*. The book was continued by E. E. Knight, who wrote *The Lost Cult*. The trilogy was closed by James Alan Gardner’s *The Man of Bronze*. Apart from the above trilogy, several other books referring to the series and collections of single stories were also published (Elrond 2007).

Lara also appeared in comics, although not initially as the main protagonist. She had her debut in the *Witchblade* series published by Top Cow. She was first featured as an assistant of the main female protagonist of the comic and was a bait which was to increase the popularity of the comic book following the game’s success. The expectations proved to be successful and it was soon decided that Lara would obtain her own comic. Each adventure was agreed with the game’s publisher, owing to which fans could better acquaint themselves with Lara’s traits of character and her emotions (Elrond 2007). All this made it possible to identify even more with the character.

*Tomb Raider* is an excellent example of transmedia storytelling. Games, films, books, and comics create a huge story we, consumers, may experience to a different degree, depending on the medium we choose to use. Among them, other aspects of the culture of participation connected with the brand they sustain – gadgets, fan fiction, cosplayers, parodies, references, etc. – ceaselessly circulate.

On this occasion, it is worth mentioning some other brands developed as a part of transmedia storytelling. The flagship product by Blizzard Entertainment – *Warcraft* – is a series which was initially produced as a game for a single player (Blizzard Entertainment 1994). Then, in 2004, it offered players the possibility to explore the world in the MMO (*Massive Multiplayer Online* – a game with many players playing via the internet at the same time) *World of Warcraft*, books (including *Warcraft: Day of the Dragon*, and *Warcraft: Lord of the Clans*), card and board games, as well as the 2016 film *Warcraft: The Beginning*.

It is similar in the case of a Japanese series of survival horrors *Resident Evil*. Since its 1996 debut, we have been offered eleven games from the main canon (including reeditions) and eighteen games from offshoot canons (including games available for portable consoles), six live action films and two animated films (Wikipedia 2016). Additionally, the *Resident Evil* brand includes numerous novelisations (Resident Evil Wiki 2015) and comics (Resident Evil Wiki 2016).

The above are only a few examples of huge brands which have evolved from games to become a symbol of pop-culture recognizable all over the world.

However, computer games are not the factor guaranteeing the success of a transmedia product. A transmedia product may successfully build a brand without the help of video games and the other way round – a product promoted with the help of video games does not necessarily guarantee brand success. Howev-

er, video games influence the player's emotional sphere, and are not an ordinary story presentation. Owing to this, players may become immersed in the game, i.e. become "transmitted" to a different reality (Filiciak 2006: 62). Immersion can also be experienced, when we read a book or watch a film. The possibility to control a character's choices, i.e. to decide about the course of the story, considerably deepens the immersion.

The Polish *Witcher* is an example of a transmedia product initially built on a written medium, and only then promoted via a game. As much as Andrzej Sapkowski's short stories and his saga about the witcher enjoyed great popularity almost from its very beginning in Poland and the neighbouring countries, in the West the title remained unappreciated and was read mainly by connoisseurs of fantasy novels. In June 2015, the first collection of stories of the Witcher – *The Last Wish* – was featured on the New York Times Best Sellers list (sol//plw 2015). Without any doubt, the above was related to the premiere of the game *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* for PCs, and Xbox One and PlayStation 4 consoles, which was released on 13 May 2015. The game was very warmly received by critics and players alike and just six months after its premiere won many awards, including the most important one: Golden Joystick's Game of the Year (Woldański 2015).

### Final remarks

The examples I have discussed above are just a few products of the entire several billion dollars worth market. It turns out, however, that video games are not only purely entertaining products, but also (if not above all) an excellent engine driving brand promotion. What is the most easily perceivable asset of transmedia products is the huge profit they generate. The consumers who will allow themselves to be immersed in the world offered by creators will not only buy and recommend a given product, but will also search for the development of the story in other media.

The second asset is the sustaining of the awareness of the brand. Gadgets, cosplays, fan modifications and fan fiction prolong the life of the brand and prevent its vanishing from the consumers' awareness. Owing to the above, it is possible to release another product even several years later, keeping going an unflagging demand for it.

Finally, transmedia products also provide advantages to consumers themselves, who are not offered a closed story which is finished when the game ends. Transmedia storytelling tells the story in various ways, but also asks many questions, which in a way force consumers to seek answers among the other media available.

On the basis of the *Tomb Raider* brand, we may conclude that video games are able to develop a very strong brand that will not only be recognisable globally, but – more importantly – will be loved by millions and will strongly influence pop-culture. Lara Croft has become a symbol joining, through various media, ab-



solutely different people all over the world. If it was not for the media, how many people would have heard about the character?

*Tomb Raider* is only one example showing very clearly that games should not remain solely in the game market area. The intermingling of the virtual entertainment market with the media market is actually desirable. Video games provide a possibility of greater immersion, at the same time being an impulse for the unification of apparently separate mass media. The internet, television, film, press (comics), literature, and even music tell one great story using different ways that are typical for them. An interesting story better attracts interest in other media, which in turn translates into money and the development of the media. Owing to this, the presented story does not end with game/film credits, but lasts as long as there are people ready to participate in a given universe.

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## Summary

*Video Games and New Media:*

*On One of the Methods to Cooperate in Creating a Brand*

Computer games have been considered as a purely entertaining product for teenagers which has no connection to other media like television, film or even books. As customers, we keep looking for new thrills. Transmedia storytelling is one of the methods allowing us to experience something new and fresh. The aim of the text is to show what a strong impact computer games have on the development of new media and brands.

## Keywords

video games, transmedia storytelling, new media, brand



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## Video games and creativity: On the potential and narration of fear

### Introduction

In the opinion of the public, video games are marked by a specific ambivalence. On the one hand, are slowly winning acceptance, becoming a permanent element of the mainstream culture. On the other, they are still connected with many negative stereotypes. For years, they have been associated with addictions, the promotion of aggression and cruelty, and accused of “stupefying” the young recipient (Prósiniowski 2013). In 2009, Gamezilla.pl published a critique of an article whose author claimed openly that video games were related to sexual violence and presented negative models.<sup>1</sup>

The media – including the press, television, and information portals – more or less successfully build the image of games as “demonic toys”. They often combine together single, context less cases of destructive social behaviours with electronic entertainment, basing themselves on more than logically dubious assumptions. Popular television programmes such as the paradocumentary series *Szkoła* [School] (Głowacki 2014) show video games – if they show them at all – as addictive and breeding aggression. The presentation of games in talk shows such as *Rozmowy w toku* [Conversations in Progress] (Hofer 2014)<sup>2</sup> or television series such as *Ojciec Mateusz* [Father Matthew] is similar – in the case of the latter, the presentation of games and gamers was so grotesque that industry portals reacted to it, issuing a commentary (Liebert, Łukański, Pitala 2014).

Practically speaking, productions such as the ones mentioned above fail to show the potential of games, not to mention their relation to culture or the social issues they discuss. If video games appear in popular public media (outside the games industry) in a positive context, it is normally incidental. They are presented as trivia, and are treated with a distance and very superficially.

We will also find strongly negative and (often) biased information in *quasi*-pedagogical portals. For example, the article *Wpływ gier komputerowych na zdrowie psy-*

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<sup>1</sup> An example of a statement from Gamezilla.pl: “[...] they find such models for instance in computer games the plot of which boils down to catching a girl and raping her collectively” (Olszewski 2011).

<sup>2</sup> We are referring here to an example – this topic was tackled several times in the programme.

*chiczne i fizyczne dziecka* [The Impact of Video Games on Children's Mental and Physical Health], includes the following accusations:

On the other hand, this "modern form of entertainment" often terrifies with its huge load of violence and refined cruelty, stirring justified concern on the part of educators, psychologists, and pedagogues as to the negative impact of the content on children's development. [...] The concerned parents seek psychological help, but often only when their children are strongly addicted to gaming: when they suffer from muscular dystrophy from sitting at the computer, when they cease to go to school or wash themselves, and when they do not eat for many days on end (Zielińska 2015).

Obviously, such an article is not supported by any research, names of organisations or other data – we are not provided much information about the author, either, apart from her full name. The reader is presented with an almost apocalyptic vision of addicted, famished children with disappearing muscles. The blame goes on the games – and there is no reflection on the condition of the persons experiencing the problem – on their mental history, or relationships with peers and family. It is hard not to feel that the symptoms are mistaken for the source of the problem.

Hence, one may arrive at a conclusion that the media image of video games is based on arousing fear and anxiety, thus marking games as extremely dangerous and leading to the annihilation of their users.

Simultaneously, in contrast to the vast narration focused on dangers, positive aspects are omitted. The contact with new media and information technology is often one of the first experiences introducing young people to participation in culture. Easy access and the attractive form may encourage them to explore also more conventional culture transmission channels. This also translates to a convergence between various areas of culture. Contact with an electronic medium may for example be an introduction to first reading experiences (Zajac 2013). Modern devices increasingly offer an accessible and easily operated software interface facilitating access to the presented content. Owing to its intuitive nature, it allows one to overcome limitations resulting from physical fitness or barriers of knowledge and technical abilities (Bougsiaa 2013). Video games – just like all other cultural texts – introduce recipients to the world of many references to current problems of social life, history, and other forms of creativity. They enable an intermediated contact with more traditional works through active references to them. All this has a considerable educational potential, in particular in the area of the pedagogy of culture. Video games are also an extensive field of research and analyses for other social sciences, including psychology, sociology or the political sciences.

Games are products that may have both a negative and a positive influence on their users. Hence, a question appears concerning the ethics of media in relation to the creation of a unified image of video games – of a demonic, pathogenic power leading to the emaciation of the body – leaving aside their other possible influences.

Such an image of games is strengthened when pedagogical studies seem not to acquaint future teachers, educators and facilitators of social life with problems related to video games and their place in present-day culture.

This article aims at showing a different face of this part of culture rather than eculputating all games. We do not deny that there are games that may have a negative impact on younger players. Our goal is to show symbols, motifs, and archetypes used in games, and problems, around which games build their stories, as well as to highlight certain arguments in favour of a deeper and more reliable analysis of this genre of cultural texts – all this through the sketching of the possible dialogical situations between games and game users, their creative manifestations and attempts at creating paths of self-development. The showing of the other side of video games is important not only for pedagogy, but also for the social sciences themselves, which should not isolate themselves from the new and the digital, from what shapes contemporary culture and drives significant social discussions.

### Interaction between the player and the video game

Describing the relations between people and games, we shall focus on role-playing games – both the latest and the older ones available on the market. We assume that video games are a form of cultural text (Szeja 2004: 8). This means that they are a specific reflection of social beliefs and expectations, since they are written on foundations made by authors and developers: the beliefs of creators and alleged desires of the players. During the process of creation, two elements are combined: the developers' expectations of their game on the one hand, and the elements developers consider desirable and expected by the potential recipients which they use to enrich their ideas on the other. The tension between these aspects takes on various forms. Nevertheless, it is difficult to deny that along with the development of electronic entertainment, the preferences of players themselves also change, and developers try to adjust their works to them, so as to generate better sales results. The subject of the relation between the developers' intentions and their beliefs concerning the players' expectations is complex and could be the topic of a separate analysis. Let us, however, concentrate on one of the aspects resulting from it, i.e. the type of interactions with the game environment.

One of the most characteristic features of role-playing games is their immersiveness, i.e. the ability to make the players feel as if they are immersed in a fictitious world (Filiciak 2006: 62). This world is constructed on the basis of the developers' conscious and unconscious beliefs, expectations, and ways in which they perceive the world, as well as their assumptions as to the expectations of future users. Therefore, the game universe is structurally related to our reality and its elements. It corresponds to them, maintaining a certain amount of joint parts. Games aim for example at reflecting the dynamics and nature of the decision-making process at various levels – such as the selection of objects for characters or solving plot-related dilemmas (one of the main elements of the cRPG genre). Zygmunt Bauman and Tim May (1990) point out that decision-making and attempts at solving problems shape us and make us who we are. Similarly, in games, decision-making and the related dilemmas and challenges often seem to constitute the gist of the entertain-

ment. Acting immersively, games throw players headlong into problem-solving and tackling challenges, forcing them to acquire experience related to becoming familiar with fictitious stories, characters, events, and places.<sup>3</sup> Just like authors of novels tell stories and teach based on the example of their worlds closed within the book framework, game developers offer – via virtual reality – certain ideas and concepts (constructs, events, features), including even the basic understanding of gender and the related stereotypes (Prósiniowski 2015). Examples include pro-equality practices in some of the BioWare games, as well as the popular 2014 game *The Sims 4* allowing the development of single-sex relationships and bringing up children as a part of them. We may risk saying that the placement of such contents in games is an attempt at making players (including children and youth) accustomed to the existence of similar phenomena or events in daily life.

Here, we would like to refer to the previous research concerning the mechanisms of decision-making in video games (Prósiniowski 2013). Let us pay attention to a certain special aspect. One of the respondents pointed out that decisions taken in games are not treated with the same seriousness as decisions concerning real life. Nevertheless, the dilemmas that must be resolved still make one think over the decision – in particular when we know that it will have long-lasting consequences (for example decisions in the 2007 game *Mass Effect*, which affect the plot of the 2010 *Mass Effect 2* and the 2012 *Mass Effect 3*). Preliminary research showed that taking a wrong decision in video games makes some players feel pricks of conscience (Prósiniowski 2013). As much as the actions taken and their consequences were not real events, the players' related emotions were definitely authentic. Interestingly, although the possibility of autonomous decision-making and tackling the consequences of such decisions exposes the player to a kind of emotional discomfort, moral doubts and regret resulting from the actions taken, a definite majority of players value such a chance and are happy about it.

Players were also asked what they take into account, when taking decisions in games. The respondents could choose moral beliefs, role-playing, making the gameplay easier, and gratification in the form of, for example, gold or objects. They most often selected their own moral beliefs, with role-playing coming second.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that video games not only foster creativity, but also – by making the players take a decision and challenging them with moral dilemmas – may increase their sensitivity to various social and philosophical problems. When asked about the educational values of games, the players themselves indicated for example the “development of consciousness, building the hierarchy of values” and pointed out that “[...] decision-making in games teaches you to take responsibility for your actions and makes you deeply ponder on the problem”.

It is not, however, the only possible aspect of a video game's influence on the players. As results from Daphne Bavelier's work (2012), games may cause concrete

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<sup>3</sup> Although they are often created on the basis of real locations, sometimes places from games are more or less modelled on the real world.

<sup>4</sup> This research should be further developed (the text in question covered the sample of 171 persons) so as to reach more players. However, already at this stage one may notice a considerable importance of morality in the process of decision-making in games.



changes in the recipients' cognitive mechanisms (such as the speed of switching between various tasks or an increase of attention in the observation of many elements at the same time).

Can the above, however, be called an increase in creativity or creative attitude? It is certainly an introduction to what may come next.

## Creative responses to video games

By acting in immersive environment, players participate in the co-creation of the encountered *quasi*-open reality. They explore images, places, characters, and the story, and actively react to them. Analysing the above in the context of the field of research of the pedagogical sciences, games have the potential to be considerably successful where many qualified tutors and educators tackle problems.

Children's creative attitude is developed for example by teachers. Wincent Okoń describes children's creativity in the following way:

1) children's fine art; 2) in a broader understanding, multilateral activity resulting in new and original works in the area of cognition, art, and technology; it may include solving a scientific problem, constructing an original technical device, designing an original competition, writing a poem, composing a song, or painting a picture (Okoń 2001: 413).

Therefore, creativity applies to the process of the construction of something in response to a specific task or need. It involves creativeness in the scope of the generation of new ideas and concepts (Maciuszek 2002). Undertaking new activities and collecting the related experiences answering concrete needs (cognitive, emotional) and problems is a form of a developing creative activity.

Another important step is pointing out what is creative (from the users' point of view) while being directly related to video games. Let us omit the didactic aspect of discussing and expressing opinions on games, plots, and characters, which fosters the development of communication skills.<sup>5</sup> Let us focus on the phenomenon of the creation of the so-called fanfiction (abbreviated to fanfic), fanart, and fan games modifications. We shall analyse them in the above sequence.

The term fanfiction applies to textual responses to various products – including video games – typically taking the form of short stories, descriptions, continuations of events – the so-called spin-offs, etc. Fans, motivated by their interest in or fondness of fictitious characters (or other elements of a given universe), create their own texts inspired by the world of a concrete video game. Normally, this is a grassroots activity that is not profit-oriented and generates a new quality of a given production. As a result, the players' expectations and needs begin to shape the final form of the product. Teachers are often unaware that pupils enjoy writing and that they actually engage themselves in this activity. Fanfiction is clearly

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<sup>5</sup> Although even here, teachers forget that material in the form of games may be used to teach the construction of statements while addressing the pupils' interests and fascinations.

differentiated from the problematic “school writing” perceived as an unpleasant necessity. Let us have a look at the number of fanfics. One of the most popular websites devoted to this genre of creation – [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net) – features more than 300,000 (more than 340,000 including texts concerning the twenty most popular game titles<sup>6</sup>) short stories devoted solely to motifs from video games.

Fanart – just like fanfiction – is a social form of reaction to popular culture productions: series, films, and games. A response to them comes in the form of fine arts in a variety of techniques – photographs and photo manipulations, drawings, collages, paintings, etc. . The diverse forms of fan art also include cosplay.<sup>7</sup> Many authors of art works can be found dispersed throughout the internet, for instance on the popular website deviantArt ([www.deviantart.com](http://www.deviantart.com)), where various artists share everything we may classify as art.

Fanart varies in terms of its technical quality and artistic value. Some works represent a high professional level, while others are just the opposite – they can be the results of the first artistic efforts, a step towards the development and improvement of artistic means and technique. The involvement resulting from one’s fondness for a given game increases the motivation to improve the effects of one’s work. It would be hard to deny that in some cases works produced in this way astonish with their aesthetic value. The graphic work *BG: Friendly Arm* as presented below is an example of an interaction between an improvement of the author’s graphic technique and her individual interest in video games (in this case *Baldur’s Gate*). The combination of professional knowledge and passion is a starting point for the creation of a new artistic form.

Research focused on fan art seems to confirm the thesis on the creative potential of this type of activity (Manifold 2007). It is worth highlighting that when asked about the learning and development of their artistic abilities, the respondents (authors of fanarts and cosplay costumes) recall that they learnt to create independently, in their free time, owing to their internal motivation directed at their particular field of interest.

Another form of creativity is writing modifications to video games (the so-called mods). Feeling that they “still want more” and inspired after the completion of the game, many players of different ages decide to create their own modifications, adding new locations, characters, dialogues, objects, graphic solutions or other elements. Here, we are already dealing with a multimedia message combined with the ability to code new works – in this way, authors express themselves not only through text or arts, but they also develop their technological competences, challenge themselves with their own problem tasks, and work with the engine of a concrete video game. Examples of websites grouping “modders” include Spellhold Studios, Gibberlings3, and Pocket Plane Group (for the series *Baldur’s*

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<sup>6</sup> The number of texts as at 18 June 2015.

<sup>7</sup> An initiative consisting in dressing up as characters known from comics, games, films, animations, serials and other products of popular culture. It often combines imitation of the character’s manners, including the manner of speech. A frequent element of various convents and festivals. Sometimes fans (persons who dress up) create all the costume elements themselves.



Il. 1. BG: *Friendly Arm* by artastrophe – an example of fanart.  
Source: <http://artastrophe.deviantart.com/art/BG-Friendly-Arm-437523349>  
[accessed on 12.03.2015].

*Gate* [1998, and 2000] and *Icewind Dale* [2000, and 2002]) or Nexus Mods for games representing various genres. In the case of the creation of expansions-mods, the creators are simultaneously the recipients of a given production. Writing an extension, they are guided by their own experience with the game, draw conclusions, and generate new content on their basis.

The three above-mentioned forms of creative activity can be applied to video games. Therefore, it seems justified to say that games may in certain conditions inspire their users to engage in creative, innovative activity, thus constituting a valuable field of exploration for pedagogues.

The forms of activity described herein are responses to players' internal needs and are something new – being created directly by the authors (owing to inspiration from games and other cultural texts). As a part of the creative process, games are reinterpreted by the players – fan works will never have the same quality as the content represented in the original game.

It is also worth mentioning the social aspect of this type of creativity – on the occasion of creation (fanfics, fanart or mods), authors come together, making more or less complex communities, as a part of which they exchange opinions, works, ideas, and reflections. Owing to this – along with the creative techniques – they improve their social competences. These communities also build the sense of a common goal and interest. The developing fan groups are referred to as fan-

doms. They are related not only to concrete fora or portals, but also convents and less public meetings combined with the entertainment aspect – more or less oriented towards the joint passion. Fandoms witness a spontaneous, informal education based on the development of creativity and collaboration, joint reviewing of works created as a part of the group and sharing reflections and information concerning both the circle of interest and (often through digression) aspects from outside it. What is more, through the social bonds and attractiveness of the groups – as pointed out by Piotr Siuda (2008) following Henry Jenkins – members of the group learn more actively and with more involvement. The development of virtual communities and the dissemination of one's works results in the emergence of new spaces of existence of known social discourses. Examples include the subject of sexuality and the coming-outs of homo- or bi-sexual individuals – by creating homoerotic fanart and making it public, some authors may become accustomed to their sexuality or make others aware of their sexual preferences (Dennis 2010). At such a moment, fanart becomes a sort of work with the awareness of one's own corporeality, and transforms into a message and a confession. Jeffery P. Dennis writes as follows:

Also, creating and posting [on websites – P.P., P.K.] homoerotic pictures and then responding to fan comments (including questions like “Are you gay?”) seems to be in itself part of the process of “coming out” of the cultural presumption of universal heterosexual desire (Dennis 2010: 11).

Dennis believes that fandoms become socially significant places of discussion, since they are a space in which voices and confessions of real people can be heard like a digitized echo of their extra-virtual life.

This becomes even more significant through the prism of Polish culture. Marek Sokołowski (2012: 251–252) says that:

Homosexual motifs in Polish media continue to be a taboo, are rare, and are very often marginalised. Social awareness concerning the image of gay people in Poland [...] is created by television series [...]. In Poland, the image of homosexuals in the media is mainly based on stereotypes and schemes.

Therefore, we may say that artistic coming-outs, the creation of homoerotic images, sharing the works, and discussion – although in a slightly closed community – become a noticeable (and worthy of mention) counterweight to the tabooization and marginalisation of homosexual motifs in Poland.

Obviously, homoerotic content is not the only important issue of virtual flirts. Romances (and relationships as such) between game character soften become an inspiration for the creation of artistic illustrations or colourful fantasies.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The issues of erotics are also developed by Magdalena Cielecka (2014), and I included additional information in the text concerning constructs of gender and sexuality (Prósiniowski 2015), but both these texts require an extensive continuation.

## Concluding remarks

All the manifestations of creativity discussed above largely function on the sidelines of education. Here, a question springs up whether it is at all possible to introduce initiatives in the area of fanfiction, fanart and fanmods to education? Many pupils create, draw, and write in a way which is invisible to the school (teachers, instructors, and educators), leaving their achievements unnoticed. What is more, in some cases support from teachers or pedagogues could help develop talents. Going a step further, the tasks of schools should include the offering of the possibility of pupils' creative and personal development and expression, and the above-described forms are such a possibility, a potential most facilities are quiet about. Therefore, it would be difficult to find a reason why pupils should not be allowed to create fanfiction during language classes (Polish, English, etc.), to draw and paint fanart (both classically and virtually, with the help of graphic design software) during art classes, or engage in fan modifications during IT classes. At the same time, it would be tantamount to responding to some pupils' interests.

Obviously, we need to remember that not all games have the same impact on players. It is true that there are games full of violence, logical games without a plot and games reproducing stereotypes, but they all have their own potential.

Among the many game titles, we may also find ones based on the players' creativity already at the level of entertainment. We may mention such titles as the popular *Minecraft* (issued by Mojang AB in 2011), or the less popular *Cargo! Quest for Gravity* (Ice-Pick Lodge, 2011) – a game, in which – apart from following the plot – we may play a “little engineer”, and build all sorts of road, air and water vehicles from elements we find in the virtual world. There are also games aimed at sparking the imagination or developing writing skills and story-telling ability – as in, for instance, the 2014 game *Elegy for a Dead World* (developed by Dejobaan Games, LLC).

Just like literature, role-playing games exert influence on their users through the stories they tell. They can sensitise even the youngest users, offering colourful, emotional histories. The latest examples include the relatively recently (2015) published platform adventure game *Ori and the Blind Forest* (targeted at children at least seven years old, but also playable for some younger players). Apart from the manual skills development, the game also offers a story rich in sadness, joy, and compassion. It satisfies the need to experience an extensive range of emotions, and allows the players to become familiar with feelings – in this case from the safety of an armchair – while entertaining at the same time.

Importantly, games stir discussions, which are so significant for the development of the social sciences and for turning attention to those things not yet explored, interesting, and controversial. As far as the topic of video games is concerned, there are still many areas pedagogy has not yet explored – despite the fact that we know that children begin to play at a very young age. Video games are a new challenge requiring a different attitude and putting aside one's fear of phenomena related to virtual entertainment: to cultural texts, which are easily

read by everyone, including children, youth, adults, and seniors. They can exert an influence on all these groups, but not the same one on everyone – still, the very possibility is important. Here, a new task emerges for pedagogues (and social researchers as such): to thoroughly understand the phenomenon on the basis of reliable research – both qualitative and quantitative.

Let us reflect on the players' desire to exist in virtual worlds full of diverse stimuli. Let us then focus on what Tomasz Kalbarczyk said in his text devoted to the thought of Richard Rorty:

The author of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* recommends that to promote pupils' imagination and tolerance, they be provided, as a minimum, with many diverse sources of information so that moving among books, images, and films, they find the inspiration to create. [...] we are entitled to expect that they will finally find a way to describe both themselves and their community anew. The most talented of them will introduce changes to the canon of knowledge proposed by Hirsch and his likes, introduce new elements to the process of socialization of their children and will even better prepare them for autonomous development after maturity (Kalbarczyk 2007: 59).

In our times, in the era of seeking justice, freedom and development, it is worth pointing out that also games – along with books, pictures, and films – exist as a separate, fully-fledged element that is important in the context of sources of information, the provision of opportunities for new experience, and thus development and philosophising, since it is also video games which discuss morality, social life, freedom, and knowledge.

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### Summary

#### *Video Games and Creativity: On the Potential and Narration of Fear*

There is a massive amount of pedagogical literature about video games, constructing a negative image of the medium.

There are many texts about both real and hypothetical dangerous influences of games on those who play them. In our text we discuss a specific potential of video games – the ability to support creativity and social awareness (which in some situations may break taboos). In the article we also discuss other potentials of video games along with their connotations with culture and education.

### Keywords

video games, creativity, social awareness, education, emotions, culture



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## Educational content in non-educational video games

### Introduction

A new form of electronic entertainment has won considerable numbers of fans today. Sometimes, for some of the gamers, this form of spending one's free time evolves to become a professional sport (e-sport) and a way of earning one's bread. I am writing about gamers, since in this article I would like to focus on computer games (or, more broadly, video games). Before, however, I proceed to the gist of the matter, I shall present a couple of statistics concerning the electronic games' market in Poland. The studies were performed at the request of Newzoo, and were sponsored by Global Collect (Newzoo 2012). It results from them that in 2012 in Poland alone there were more than 11 million active game players. However, the above refers to all the players as such – ones playing smartphone games, games available on social media portals, fully-fledged massively multi-player online games (MMOGs), and role-playing games for consoles and personal computers. Summing up the time all people in Poland devote to playing games a day, we may obtain 20 million hours. Statistically, this would mean that each gamer devotes on average about two hours a day to playing, although – as mentioned above – some people only play short simple games on smartphones or social media portals. Hence, when focusing solely on the players using games for PCs, consoles and MMOGs, we are left with about 10 million hours a day on the scale of all players in Poland. Here, we can be accused of using absurd calculations, as they do not reflect the time an average person spends playing games. To show the scale of the importance of video games in social life, let us, then, indicate the total sum of money spent on their purchase in Poland in 2012, which ranged from 350 to 450 million zloty. This list should be extended to include games downloaded illegally, since their contents reach the players as well (I am not reflecting here on the legality of the message), but it is very difficult to explore this sector due to the *Peer to Peer* (P2P) technology used in torrent networks, as well as the users' possible unwillingness to admit that they possess illegally acquired software and games. Taking into account the intense development of this sector of entertainment, as well as the number of consumers it has grouped around it, we

should ponder whether the potential hidden in popular video games might be used from the perspective of pedagogy.

## Educational games vs popular games

The reason I have focused on popular games results to some extent from the nature of educational games. They have some limitations that are very difficult to overcome. Educational games are created with the development of children at an early stage of life in mind. Practically speaking, it borders on the impossible to find games of this type addressed to lower and upper secondary school youth or adults. These can be single apps assisting in the performance of specific tasks, but in such a case they are considered solely as a tool – just like an abacus or wooden forms of geometrical figures in the past. Labelling a game as “educational” may be satisfying for pedagogues, but addresses it as such to a niche. Such a game would be used only for didactic purposes, due to which youth will prefer other, more entertaining games and activities in their free time. We should not overlook the fact of a much better financing of popular games in comparison with educational games. This translates to the better quality, length, audiovisual side and marketing of the former. I have mentioned youth, but the problem of the competitiveness of educational game exists already at the level of primary schools. According to a report by Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych [Educational Research Institute] (IBE 2014) concerning the games pupils aged six-seven years play most often, the most popular titles among this age group include *Minecraft*, *FIFA*, *The Sims*, *Counter-Strike*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *League of Legends* and *World of Tanks*. None of them can be called an educational game, although this does not mean that they should be disregarded as a possible source of the creation of behaviours or the provision of knowledge. For example, such games as *Minecraft* may shape creativity through their open world designed solely for building (resembling virtual Lego bricks). *Counter-Strike*, *World of Tanks* and *League of Legends* may contribute to an improvement of reflex, speed of reaction and decision-making. *FIFA* may teach the importance of team play, while *The Sims* – responsibility. However, I wish to point out that we are dealing only with a possibility of such an impact, since a lot depends on the way the game contents are used. In this place, we can see yet another problem, which, fortunately, today is gradually diminishing, i. e. the attitude of pedagogical circles to video games. When I started to explore this subject (about seven years ago), the relevant literature was dominated by products containing such words in its titles as “killers”, “violence” and “murderers”. Here, we may refer to books by Iwona Ulfik-Jaworska (2005) or Thomas Feibel (2006). Their works concentrate on just one, selected aspect of games, omitting many others. One may actually be under an impression that the main goal of these books is to present games in a negative light, suggesting the superiority of educational games (or, more broadly speaking – games created under the guidance of pedagogues) over popular games. Since

then, however, many works have been published, which approach the complexity of video games in a comprehensive manner. Along with the generational replacement of pedagogical environments, we may also observe a change of rhetoric in works devoted to the issue. The first fully-fledged narrative video games appeared on the Polish market around 1998 (with arcade games one could play in game parlours, which experienced their golden age in the West in the 1980s, slowly fading into oblivion). Thus, persons who had their first contact with them being 10–13 years old, are 27–30 years today. On the one hand, we are therefore dealing with an interesting phenomenon of parents-players, and on the other, with persons writing about games, who have many years of gaming experience and know many game types, infiltrating the pedagogic circles.

The financing of such games also plays an important role, since developers have sponsors (this particularly refers to *free to play* games), who can impose their will as far as the content of the game is concerned, adjusting the plan to meet the best possible sales results. In the case of educational games, the educational content is the priority, while the sales figures depend on financing from a given institution. On the other hand, commercial success may be not taken into account at all, on the assumption that the only significant criterion is the fulfilment of the educational function. Owing to sponsorship, popular games can, however, create a lot of hype around them long before their premiere, which makes the number of their potential users much larger than in the case of educational games, which have much less financing. In this case, commercialisation decides about the phenomenon of the impact rate, which guarantees the status of “popular” to the games in question. This scale may be significant in the process of attempts at using materials hidden in popular games owing to the possibility of the understanding of the reception of educational content. In other words – along with an increase in popularity of a given game, it is gradually easier to refer to its particular elements owing to their recognition.

The last issue I would like to refer to in this part is the model of cooperation of pedagogical circles with the video game market. In the case of educational games, pedagogues are in a privileged position – they create the concept of the contents before the development of the game. It is only on this concept that audiovisual contents are created. This attitude would, however, have to be discontinued in the case of cooperation with large companies developing video games and be replaced with partnership. Naturally, this would mean that developers would also have to resign from their sense of being privileged in view of their finances, and I shall elaborate on this further on.

### The possible examples of educational contents in popular games

It would be very difficult to enumerate all the possible attitudes to the hidden contents in popular video games in view of the sheer number of such games. I do

not exclude that in some games I will have failed to notice such contents due to my knowledge gaps (for example, I could not see a relation between the game content and the knowledge area I might refer to).

First, I shall Focus on the *Assassin's Creed* series, as it has a large potential in this context. It is a series of narrative action-adventure games based in various historical epochs – from the crusades, through the renaissance, colonialism, the establishment of the USA, all the way to the French revolution (for the time being – the series is still being developed). The player, taking on the role of the main character, is thrust straight into the war between two orders – Assassins and Templars – who despite their official fall according to historical sources, continue to exist as secret associations, fighting a worldview war with each other. In the game itself, one may experience a lot of pseudo-historical content changed to fit the plot, and what seems most interesting from the perspective of educational content, is the Animus database. The main protagonist reproduces recollections of his predecessors (coded in genetic memory) through a device called Animus. When the game is stopped, one may access the database containing historical descriptions of figures, events, and places players meet on their way. They are largely consistent with historical descriptions, excluding certain elements that were modified for the purposes of the game (e. g. that Charles Lee was a member of the Order of Templars). The separation of the truth from the fiction would be the task of a pedagogue, but the database itself encourages one to become familiar with descriptions by visiting places (this makes a description of the place appear in the database). The situation is similar in the case of persons. Part three of the series includes a very extensive description of George Washington, as well as many other, less important figures connected with the American revolution. The database also provides information on the degree to which it is complete (in per cent), which makes players aware of how much they have already discovered.

Another example is the game *Watch Dogs* released in 2014, in which the player plays as Aiden Pierce, a protagonist living in Chicago in 2020. The background of the world slightly resembles George Orwell's *1984*. The main threads include the development of the omnipresent system of surveillance, officially designed to simplify life, referred to as the *Citizen Operational System* (CtOS). Aiden is a rebellious hacker. He looks for people responsible for the death of his niece, discovering the real motivations behind the development of the system. He simultaneously becomes aware what an ideal tool of control it is. Apart from the obvious aspect of reference to the threats thoughtless digitation and development of safety systems may involve, the game also offers other aspects. In the virtual Chicago, we may find points with QR codes, which play a coded voice message after being scanned. One of the messages includes a description of a hypothetical social media profile, including personal posts concerning earnings and private life, as well as a photo of a child showing the neighbourhood with a proud parent's comment that the daughter can now walk to school on her own. This is obviously to inspire reflection and awareness of the risks involved in posting information on social media portals. Another element that can be explored are hotspots players can

visit to learn more about a given place (just like in the case of *Assassin's Creed*). This offers familiarisation with the history of Chicago – mainly from the times of Al Capone and John Dillinger, as well as the present day history of parks, monuments, and tower blocks. It is basically a virtual sightseeing of the city (which has been minutely reconstructed in the game) with elements of learning its history and architecture.

Games offer many more elements like this – be it Germanic mythology in the game *World of Warcraft* released in 2004, the exploration of post-apocalyptic areas around Chernobyl and Pripjat in the 2007 game *Stalker*, or questions concerning ethics and the meaning of being a human being posed by the *Deus Ex* series. All these issues can be a great starting point for a more advanced discussion. What is, however, most important, is that they inspire curiosity and reflection in a natural way, being only a part of a larger narration. There is also one more joint element which it is initially hard to notice. The educational is hidden in two ways. The game title itself may have a specific meaning to be decoded by the players – which often requires referring to a broader cultural context. Other contents with educational potential may also be elements of the world presented by the game. To find them, one needs to perform concrete actions: visit places, devote some time to looking for codes, etc. . In other words, one needs to pick up collectibles or – more broadly speaking – accomplish achievements. Krzysztof Gonciarz indicates a huge importance of the system of achievements in video games (Gonciarz 2011). They not only keep up one's satisfaction with the game, but they also introduce the mechanism of gamification. In the games in question, the degree of one's familiarisation with the Animus database or places in Chicago was made available on the game developer's external portal (Ubisoft's Uplay), allowing the gamers to compete as to who will discover points faster or who will discover more points. The work and time devoted to the accomplishment of the missions make the players have a closer look at what they have just discovered, even out of curiosity. If the same information was provided to the gamers on a silver platter, they would probably not want to lose time on becoming familiar with them, as after all its discovery would not require any effort, and additionally everyone would have access to it, making it little attractive. Only the form of achievement may make the sideline content more attractive, thus to the advantage of pedagogues who would like players to become familiar with the contents, instead of focusing themselves solely on the main plot thread.

## Hypothetical model of cooperation

After the attacks on the WTC, the US army began to search for new army training solutions. The video game market provided a specific form of assistance. The MIME-NET concept developed by James Der Derian and further extended by Ian Bogost (2007), assumes a model of cooperation based on a partnership between the military sector and the video game industry. Under the doctrine, the army un-

dertook to provide very detailed models of vehicles, weapons, and armaments, as well as huge amounts of money in exchange for the development of combat simulators. The game market can use the obtained materials for the creation of the possibly realistic war and battle games, while the army is provided with a high quality virtual environment designed for teaching the operation of concrete equipment, and social simulators enabling simulation of, for instance, an action involving the search of a flat in Afghanistan – what the correct behaviour is, what must not be done and what should be given particular attention. Additionally, war games showing the contemporary battlefield are a free marketing campaign for the army, encouraging the players to join it. The players see the equipment, tactics, and communication, but the most terrifying elements such as the wailing of injured soldiers and mental diseases resulting from a long stay in the conflict zone are not included in the game.

One may wonder to what extent it would be possible to initiate a similar form of cooperation between pedagogues and the video game industry. The introduction of intentionally educational content to games would be an obvious advantage for pedagogues, but a question emerges what pedagogical circles could offer the video game market in return. It is an issue of key importance, and the answer would require a debate on the materials and means that pedagogues have at their disposal. Concerns might be, for example, partially relieved from the need to perform marketing surveys by a promotion of interest in video games as a part of the conducted educational research. An excellent example is the already mentioned survey performed by IBE, which, carried out also on older children and youth and extended to include additional questions, could provide interesting materials to be used by the game developers. Quantitative data would include information on the attractiveness of content, focus of attention on concrete threads, degree of the fulfilment of achievements, time spent playing, as well as all sorts of correlations. Today, developers use independent reviewers to promote their games. The reviewers have extensive YouTube channels, with the number of visitors and subscribers exceeding a dozen or so thousand (for each channel), but their reviews are often affected by a developer/reviewer contract (under which, for example, the reviewers must not criticize certain game elements). What is used here is the power of concerns, which could be offset by the cooperation of pedagogical institutions with the game developers. The evaluation of the contents, gamification, as well as the audiovisual side combined with an exploration of these elements could be provided by interviews with players, observation of their behaviours (in the world of games and outside it) as well as a standard sociological/pedagogical content analysis. Its results could provide qualitative data. Reports from such surveys could be used by pedagogues to reflect on what sort of and how much contents could be included in concrete games, and the video game market would be provided with in-depth analyses of its titles, as well as guidelines concerning the improvement of the quality of future products. Such research, maintaining the status of the scholarly, could be provided with grants and co-financing, which would pose



a partial financial relief to developers in exchange for consultations concerning the introduction of educational contents to games – consistent with their narrations and universe. It is naturally just one suggested model of cooperation created on the basis of the existing MIME-NET model – however, I cannot exclude that there could be other, perhaps even more effective models.

The development of a detailed model of cooperation and the possible use of the contents would always require an individual approach. Every type of games (note – this is about every type of game, and not every game) offers contents that could be included in the educational process. The popular smartphone game *Angry Birds* uses a flight trajectory to destroy the enemy's structures. Thus, the game can be used as a tool for the teaching of mathematics (calculation of angles) or physics (for instance the explanation of the basic issues concerning the behaviour of momentum), as it uses these particular elements in the form of pure entertainment. An increasing number of institutions use the game *Minecraft* to teach mathematics, programming, logical thinking, and the development of children's creativity (for example the organization called Mindcloud [2016]). In the games such as *Europa Universalis* the movement of the conquering armies of historical leaders can be presented, and at the same time the shape of borders from concrete historical periods can be consolidated. In such cases, educators are provided with ready tools that only wait to be used without the need to intervene in the game's content. Thus, such use of the game would be the first step towards mutual trust between the video games industry and the educational sector. Going further – institutions such as the aforementioned Mindcloud could begin to produce ideas concerning the contents it would be good to include in popular games. This would also require cooperation between private institutions using popular games for educational purposes, and pedagogical environments – both the ones working directly with pupils (teachers at schools), and theoreticians of education (higher education establishments). Otherwise, the introduction of the model of the use of games during classes itself could take decades. If the public sector agrees to concrete games being purchased to be used during lessons (let me stress – I am not talking about purely educational games), this would open up an entirely new marketing gate to the video games industry, encouraging further users to buy the product (users understood as pupils, naturally). Thus, at the price of adding educational elements (developed in cooperation with the ministry of education) to the contents of their products, game developers would acquire free marketing in educational establishments, as well as the possibility to obtain information on concrete titles on the basis of the performed educational research (creating an element of a client profile). The greatest obstacle during the application of such a model is the global nature of this form of entertainment. An international organization grouping representatives of pedagogical environments from the particular countries as delegates of their ministries of education would have to be used or established. The institution would present to game developers jointly developed concepts concerning the introduction of educational contents

in the games that would be entered for such a model of cooperation. Since this would require a unity of administration in the area of the management of the public sector, we could only talk about the foundation of several such institutions for concrete regions (a hypothetical European Council for Digital Education or its equivalent in the USA). Thus, the idea could remain unfulfilled due to the issue of project financing, since games approved by American pedagogues could be absent in European schools and the other way round. As a result, only European game publishers would cooperate with the European council, and the US ones would cooperate with its US equivalent. Taking into account that the vast majority of video games are developed by American studios, the European Union would not have the appropriate game base that could be promoted in educational programmes. It is one of the problems that would call for a determination of a model of agreeing international cooperation (e. g. whether or not the UE would recognise the games approved by the US council and finance their introduction to educational programmes). However, these are issues that would have to be solved by way of negotiations.

Regardless of the form of cooperation, pedagogues would have to remember that the market of popular video games will not consider educational contents in their products as a priority. Thus, the possibility to impose contents is lost, and what remains is only negotiation of its form and introduction. What can be a problem, is, for example, the provision of information sources. I have already mentioned the *Animus* database – the descriptions of people and places do not include the sources the creators used when developing it. We are dealing here with the problem of the “library of Babel” – a topic tackled by Jorge Luis Borges, to whom Andrew Keen referred when discussing digital contents, saying that Borges predicted “[...] the horrors of the infinite library, one that has no center, no logic. Instead, it is a chaos of information, ‘composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries’” (Keen 2007: 84). The inclusion of sources and references could be considered as an excessive interference in the game’s content and its excessive “scientification”. Thus, the recipient would have to trust that the game creators “did their homework” and do not provide them with rubbish. A game branded by a scientific institution as one of the partners could build up a much stronger trust in the provided contents. On the other hand, the same institutions must think about whether they could sign themselves under a game containing significant amounts of violence, sex, and vulgar language. These are some of the fundamental questions in the dialogue that would have to be initiated between pedagogues and developers of video games—about who would be ready to take what concessions.

## Summary

The idea of a restrictive policy towards video games, combined with a negative vocabulary used by pedagogical circles, which was typical for 1995–2005 in



Poland, brought about a decisive reaction of the new generations of researchers inspired by research pursued in the West. We must not allow a situation when video games become an element of opposition to attitudes and behaviours created by pedagogues. Since the games have already become an important element of the daily activity of children, youth and adults, pedagogues must search for a common field to create a synergy between educational content and the content the games provide. A search for the hidden contents helpful in the creation of outlines of important problems is only the first step towards a bilateral cooperation between educational institutions and video game developers. Today, the direction of communication between the two sectors depends primarily on the parties' attitude to their ideas and solutions. To talk about them, a dialogue is required. I think that it would be the subsequent step on the road to the synergy in question.

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## Summary

### *Educational Messages in Non-educational Video Games*

This article points out the possible uses of hidden educational messages in popular video games, and hypothetical models of cooperation between the pedagogical environment and the makers of video games. The basic differences between popular video games, and educational video games are demonstrated as well. The subsequent part of the article explains why the pedagogical environment should focus more on designing popular games rather than forcing themselves to create more educational ones. The examples of hidden messages are taken from such titles as *Assassin's Creed*, *Watch Dogs*, and *World of Warcraft*. The MIME-NET model is used as a ground for hypothetical cooperation.

## Keywords

video games, computer games, educational messages, educational games, hidden messages

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## “Imagine the World...” – About Youth Hopelessness, Sleep Disorder and Alcohol Abuse

The sense of hopelessness often accompanies adolescents, not only because of their developmental age but also the reality in which they function on a daily basis. Their closest environment, understood as home and school, involves many factors of the risk of a psychological crisis in the life of a young person. The sense of hopelessness is one of the diagnostic criteria to which particular attention should be devoted when diagnosing anxiety and depression disorders or generalized anxiety disorder (Kendler *et al.* 1992). Sleep disorders and alcohol abuse, which may coexist with the sense of hopelessness, are additional risk factors – affecting not only young people’s current quality of life but also the direction of their future development. The analysis I have carried out corresponds to the measurement of the sense of hopelessness in teenagers performed by Agnieszka Kulik and Elżbieta Sądel (2013). This study demonstrated that anxiety and low quality of life determine the sense of hopelessness in youth. The topic of the sense of hopelessness and depressiveness has been the subject of interest of researchers for many years. It is very important from the point of view of the need to support the correct development of young people. This knowledge, acquired on the basis of thorough research, constitutes a significant element of preventive mental health work. In view of the above, I decided in particular to analyse a selected scope of the manner of the mental functioning of the school youth in the context of the sense of hopelessness and selected mental disorders. The topic in question takes on an additional significance when discussed against the background of sleep disorders and alcohol abuse. The absence of sleep and continued intoxication with alcohol affect the quality of life – in particular at the key stages of human mental and physical development. This may contribute to a general lowering of the concentration on tasks and motivation to reach the anticipated goals, and even to development of escape behaviours, including a resignation from the already undertaken activities such as systematic school attendance or studying for examinations.

The sense of hopelessness is typically analysed in the context of depression. Aaron T. Beck turned particular attention to problems related to the measurement of pessimism, developing the Hopelessness Scale (Beck *et al.* 1974). Since the depressive triad he proposed originates from the cognitive model of depression, it is

also referred to as a cognitive triad. It is understood as the existence of negative thoughts in three areas of thinking: thinking about oneself, about the world, and about the future (Grzesiuk 2006). In Poland, this topic has been discussed by Piotr Oleś, who in cooperation with Andrzej Juros developed a Polish adaptation of the scale (Oleś, Juros 1985–1986). The sense of hopelessness is a certain way of self-perception, which is specific in view of a systematic incorrect explanation of the acquired experience, expectation of negative results of one's own actions, and execution of significant life goals without an objective foundation (Oleś 1996). The scale in question is directly related to the third element of Beck's depressive cognitive triad – the negative and pessimistic assessment of the future (Stach 1991). The tool consists of twenty statements to which the respondents answer in a positive or a negative way depending on whether or not they agree with them. The larger the score, the higher the persons' sense of hopelessness. The total score ranges between 0 and 20 points. The result of 0–3 reflects an absence of the sense of hopelessness, the score of 4–8 its minimum degree, 9–14 its moderate degree, while 15 points or more are tantamount to a deep sense of hopelessness. The scale is among the frequently used measurements of the quality of life and general mental welfare. It has been used, for example, by Janusz Czapiński (Czapiński 2004), Romuald Derbis (Derbis 2000), and Paweł Boski (Boski, Jarymowicz, Malewska-Peyre 1992). The reliability of the scale, depending on the population studied and the method used, ranges from 0.65 to 0.93, which makes it satisfactory (Wnuk, Hędzulek 2008).

To diagnose mental disorders in youth, the *Primary Care Evaluation of Mental Disorders Patient Health Questionnaire* [PRIME-MD – PHQ] was used (Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams 1992). It is only a screening tool designed for a primary evaluation of potential disorders. Here, primary evaluation is understood as a preliminary diagnosis requiring further, more in-depth diagnostics to confirm or deny the disturbing symptoms. These were categorized into five groups of the most frequent mental disorders: somatisation, anxiety and depression disorders, alcohol abuse, and eating disorders. In view of a deficit of precise data on the somatic health of the respondents, the diagnosing of somatization was intentionally omitted. However, without any doubt, this is a very significant area of general human welfare and should not be omitted in the presence of comprehensive data.

The study was aimed at checking the level of hopelessness and selected mental disorders most frequently diagnosed among school youth. It was assumed that the knowledge acquired as a result of the study would allow a preliminary diagnosis in selected classes, thus increasing a chance for early intervention, preventing the emergence of some problems.

The study was carried out on a group of 71 persons of legal age, composed of 69% girls and 31% boys. They were students of secondary schools – all attending the final year class. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. Before the students started to fill in the tests, they were informed about the aim and course of the study in which they had decided to take part. The results showed that 43.7% of the young respondents do not experience hopelessness, 35.2% feel a minimal sense of hopelessness, 14% present a mild level of hopelessness, and

7.1% suffer from a deep sense of hopelessness. This means that the sense of hopelessness is felt by more than a half of the respondents (56.33%). Additionally, the study revealed that the disorders most frequently experienced in this group of persons include sleep disorders (48.57%) and a tendency for alcohol abuse (21.43%). Sleep disorders may be suffered by persons experiencing emotional tension and a difficult time. They may also be related to circadian rhythm disorders, which is important for the diagnosis of depressive disorders. Research shows that among children and youth with mental disorders, problems with sleep are a frequently occurring coexisting irregularity that it is very difficult to treat (Krysiak-Rogala, Jernajczyk 2013). Problems with falling asleep, insomnia or excessive sleep are often ignored not only by teenagers themselves, but also by their families. The current model of functioning in the society assumes a fast professional development and multitasking during the performance of often contrasting activities, which causes an excess of duties. Dissatisfaction with the results of one's work and decreased motivation or concentration are only some of the elements of chronic tiredness young people increasingly experience. A drive for success and being the best causes people to expect a lot from themselves. Apart from this, their closest environment presents increasingly growing demands. The constantly growing demands at home or school may considerably discourage activity, and foster a search for “imaginary worlds”, where the reality is created by the desire for the sense of safety and never-ending pleasure, soothing the pains of the soon commencing adulthood. The impossibility to meet the often excessively high ambitions is connected with the lowering of the quality of life and a search for easily available ways of coping with the experienced psychological burden.

As shown above, sleep disorders are very frequent among adolescents, and the share of persons abusing alcohol is also high. A national Polish study devoted to the problem of alcohol consumption revealed that the problem concerns 23% of the study participants (Wojtyła, Bojar, Biliński 2010). It also co-existed with depression (Deas, Brown 2006). It is believed that alcohol abuse is a rule among youth with mental disorders, and that a dual diagnosis should give rise to a special alertness of specialists (Galaif *et al.* 2007).

It results from the research presented that school youth experiences the sense of helplessness and faces consequences of alcohol abuse and sleep disorders. Therefore, it is worth wondering whether there is a relation between the anxiety concerning the future related to the sense of hopelessness and the use of destructive strategies of coping with difficult situations. The strategies adopted by adolescents are possibly ways in which they try to cope with stress. Stress causes changes in the functioning of our bodies at three levels: physiological (e.g. accelerated pulse, increased sweating, muscle tension), psychological (e.g. anxiety, sense of isolation, self-esteem instability) and behavioural (including impulsiveness, sleep disorders, and alcohol abuse). Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman define coping with stress as the constant changing of cognitive and behavioural efforts aimed at controlling concrete external and internal requirements burdening or exceeding our resources. Lazarus identifies two basic stress-coping functions: the instrumental function

oriented at the problem, and the function relating to the control of unpleasant emotions understood as emotional tension or negative emotional states (Lazarus 1986). The researchers attempted to systematise ways of coping with stress, identifying: confrontation (i.e. defence of one's standpoint), fighting with difficulties to satisfy one's needs, planning of solving the problem (i.e. planned action in response to the stressing situation), distancing oneself (i.e. undertaking an effort aimed at moving the problem away), avoidance (understood as the application of the escape strategy, fantasizing or initiating wishful thinking), self-accusation, self-aggression, self-control taking the form of refraining from experiencing unpleasant emotions, the search for support, and positive revaluation, i.e. the search for and concentration on the so-called good sides to the stressful situation with a view to diminishing the sense of failure or loss (Lazarus 1986).

It is worth discussing the quality of life, mental health and ways of coping with difficult situations in particular with young people. Taking into account the availability of psychoactive substances and a low level of awareness of coping with emotional tension among school youth, the problem in question should be considered a priority. Educational establishments, parents and guardians, should develop their competences in the area of constructive ways of coping with difficult, stressful situations. Schools should deliver classes aimed at development and support in the area of social competences and alternative ways of solving disputes (such as school mediations, including peer ones), and it would be worthwhile to include them in the school's preventive and pedagogical programme. The pedagogical process offers a chance for development and future consolidation of the desired behaviour among youth. It provides a possibility for supporting the correct development of young persons' personalities and preparing them for the difficulties resulting from adult life in a way that is for them.

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## Summary

### *"Imagine the World..." – About Youth Hopelessness, Sleep Disorder and Alcohol Abuse*

Adolescents often experience the sense of hopelessness, not only because of their age and stage of development but also the reality (especially school) in which they function on a daily basis. Hopelessness is one of the diagnostic criteria that should be met during the diagnosis of depressive disorders. It can coexist with sleep disorders and a tendency to alcohol abuse, which are additional risk factors that affect not only the current quality of life, but also the future of young people.

The aim of the study was to search for answers to the question of whether school children experience a sense of hopelessness. Another goal was to combine these results with the possibly comorbid mental disorders and discuss the possible impact of social expectations on the perception of reality by adolescents.

The study was conducted on a group of 71 adult students of the final year in a public secondary school in the Pomeranian voivodship. The research was based on two tools: the Primary Care Evaluation of Mental Disorders Patient Health Questionnaire (PRIME-MD-PHQ), which evaluates the symptoms of the five groups of mental disorders, and the Beck Hopelessness Scale. It has been shown that 43.7% of the young people do not experience a sense of hopelessness, 35.2% feel a mild sense of hopelessness, 14% present a moderate level of hopelessness, and 7.1% suffer from a profound sense of hopelessness. In addition, it was discovered that the most common disorders in this group of subjects include sleep disorder (48.57%) and a tendency to alcohol abuse (21.43%).

### Keywords

sense of hopelessness, mental disorders, adolescents



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## Women's hell – the contemporary picture in the media space of the right to abortion. The case of the enslavement or emancipation of women?

There are many works on abortion, and so this article shall definitely not discuss all the threads and contexts of this issue exhaustively. In Poland – apart from scientific publications – numerous documents, articles, information booklets, the results of surveys performed by various organisations (Federacja na Rzecz Kobiet i Planowania Rodziny / Federation for Women and Family Planning, Human Life International, and others), annual reports of the Council of Ministers on the effects of the act, and reports of the Commissioner for Human Rights are published.

There are also some works devoted to the topic of the language used in the abortion discourse. These include publications by Anna Matuchniak-Krasuska (1995), Agnieszka Graff (2001), Katarzyna Gawlicz (2005), and Ewelina Wejbert-Wąsiewicz (2012). Each of the researchers referred to changes affecting language and the gradual “vanishing” of women from the public space.

Analysing the language of pro-life experts, Anna Matuchniak-Krasuska revealed many semantic manipulations, such as the elimination of neutral terms, introduction of specific synonyms, exclusion of some phrases, and redefinition of other ones. The words “embryo” and “foetus” were replaced with the terms “unborn baby” and “unborn child”, and the word “mother” was replaced with the word “woman”. Abortion is referred to as “killing”, “murder” or “intrauterine mutilation of the child”, while the doctor performing the surgery is called an “abortionist”, or “murderer of the innocent” (Matuchniak-Krasuska 1995).

In her feature *Znikająca kobieta – czyli polskie rozmowy o prawie do aborcji* [The Vanishing Woman – Or Polish Discussions on the Right to Abortion], Agnieszka Graff wrote that what counts in the public debate on women's right to abortion is not only the power of arguments, but also the power of the voice, since what is at stake is whose belief and whose language will become obligatory for everyone. In her opinion, Poland has witnessed the legitimation of a way of thinking and talking about abortion, as well as evaluating it, which is justified solely on religious grounds (Graff 2001: 112). The feminist believes that the reasons behind the “vanishing” of women in the debate should be sought in the pro-choice environment's defeat in the linguistic war.

According to Katarzyna Gawlicz, discussions on abortion in Poland have long stepped beyond the context determined by thinking about the situation of women

and their rights, to be typically situated within the discourse of morality defining abortion (Gawlicz 2005: 99). In her article *Płeć i naród. Dyskurs dotyczący aborcji w "Naszym Dzienniku" a konstruowanie tożsamości narodowej* [Gender and People. Abortion Discourse in the 'Nasz Dziennik' and the Construction of National Identity], the author also stated that the manner of discussing abortion is dominated by the discourse of morality. However, in the nationality discourse (covering the concept of morality under which abortion is a murder, but which does not boil down solely to it alone) abortion is used as an instrument for building and maintaining a specific vision of the Polish national identity.

Subsequently, Ewelina Wejbert-Wąsiewicz in her book *Aborcja w dyskursie publicznym. Monografia zjawiska* [Abortion in the Public Discourse. A Monograph on the Phenomenon] pointed out that when the issue of the permissibility of abortion left Parliament to be broadly discussed by the public, society experienced a division, as a part of which supporters of the maintenance of the right to abortion were referred to as backers of the "civilisation of death", and those favouring the draft act delegating abortion as "promoters of ignorance, backwardness and the Middle Ages, murderers of women". The subsequent step consisted in the identification of pro-life and pro-choice supporters (the former backing life, and the latter choosing against life). In retrospect, the author concluded that the "language battle" was won by the abortion ban supporters (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2012: 84).

### Ban on abortion and totalitarian systems

In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin and the Catholic Church were unanimous as to the women's reproductive rights – the task of women was to give birth to children. Mussolini planned purposeful overpopulation for colonisation purposes, while in Russia the revolution initially brought about a relative sex-related liberalism, to replace it a dozen or so years later with the policy of reproducing Soviet people to the Italian fashion – a total ban on abortion, making divorces difficult and awards for mothers-leaders. In the Nazi Germany, drastic penalties were introduced for abortion, while birth control textbooks were burnt at the stake (Zaremba-Bielawski 2011: 348). The authorities of the German Reich consistently closed down family planning centres, and the Führer awarded German mothers of many children with the Mother's Cross of Honour.<sup>1</sup> Nazi propaganda considered women's rights – in particular the right to abortion – as a symptom of a communist-Jewish plot against the German Reich (Graff 2001: 133). The restrictive laws applied to German women only. Polish women could terminate pregnancy without any problem, since Nazis considered them an "element of little

<sup>1</sup> *Ehrenkreuz der Deutschen Mutter (Mutterkreuz)* – an order in the form of a cross, founded by Hitler and awarded under the regulation of 16 December 1938 to mothers of many children in three classes: bronze (for four-five children), silver (for six-seven children) and golden (for at least eight children). The distinction was awarded as a part of the "Battle for Births" and could only be given to women meeting race-related criteria. Mothers who were "anti-social" or "posed little value from the racial" or "mental" point of view, were excluded.

value”, which should be exterminated. Adolf Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*: “The right to personal freedom comes second in importance to the duty of maintaining the race”, and “We must also do away with the conception that the treatment of the body is the affair of every individual” (Hitler quoted after Steinem 1983: 309). In 1934, during his speech given to the Nationalist Social Women’s Organisation, he said: “Every child that a woman brings into the world is a battle, a battle waged for the existence of her people...” (Hitler quoted after Steinem 1983: 319).

In Romania, the situation of women during the rule of Elena and Nicolae Ceausescu was similar. On 1 October 1966, a decree was announced pronouncing abortion as a serious crime against health, having a negative impact on the increase of the population. The only admissible exclusions were incest and rape. At the beginning of the 1980s, obligatory and frequent sanitary check-ups and gynaecological visits were introduced for women, during which doctors were to check whether the patients had not had an illegal abortion. Every woman was obligatorily examined in this scope in her workplace on a monthly basis.

Elena Ceausescu told her students:

Do not pay attention to your backward parents. Do not wait with making love, and if you get pregnant, all the better. You will only be doing a favour to your homeland. If this happens to you, make sure you do not tell your parents, but hide with it instead and talk to me, and I will advise you how to get rid of the newborns immediately after birth: they will be looked after by the state (Ducret 2012: 273).

Soon orphanages all over the country were bursting at the seams.

Agnieszka Graff paid particular attention to the close relation between a ban on abortion and totalitarian systems. In her opinion, taking the right to abortion away from women fits in with a tribe vision of the nation, under which women are to give birth to new community members for the benefit of the community, while men are to kill members of other tribes. Graff believes that what is of absolute value in the ideology of totalitarianism is not the life of a born or unborn person, but the power of the tribe or nation expressed by the numerousness of its population (Graff 2001: 133–134).

## Abortion law in Poland

The abortion law determining the range of situations entitling women to terminate their pregnancies has been changed several times in Poland. At the turn of the 1920s/1930s, a debate concerning the change of the anti-abortion law took place. The right to abortion for all the women (regardless of class divisions, and the family’s financial situation) was demanded for instance by Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, Irena Krzywicka, and by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, the author of the most important feminist manifesto of the interwar years (Boy-Żeleński 2013). They all realised that the total ban on abortion maintained by the state was aimed at a military success during a possible war.

Irena Krzywicka – a Polish feminist, writer, translator, and publicist – wrote as follows in the quarterly *Życie Świadome* [Conscious Life] in 1937:

This is the desire, common for all the dictatorships, for human meat, be it the worst quality, be it cankered by diseases and hunger. This is an expression of open or hidden militarism. Soldiers! As many soldiers as possible [...]. The call for births is a herald of war! (Krzywicka 1937 quoted after Zaremba-Bielawski 2011: 352).

In turn, Boy-Żeleński in *Piekło kobiet* [Women's Hell] stated: "[...] the call for unlimited births is imperialism, retaliation, a future war. The day on which Polish women would agree with the German ones to 'demobilise wombs', would be an important day for peace among the humanity" (Boy-Żeleński 2013: 96).

On 11 July 1932, a regulation was adopted repealing the total ban on abortion which was in force during the partitions. It became legal to terminate pregnancies occurring as a result of incest, rape, or intercourse with a minor below 15 years of age, and on medical grounds. It was one of the most liberal solutions in Europe.

During the German occupation, between 1943 and 1945, women in Poland had for the first (and so far the only) time the right to abortion "on demand". The act of 27 April 1956 allowed termination of pregnancy on medical grounds, due to difficult living conditions and when suspected that the pregnancy occurred as a result of a crime (in practice on woman's demand) (CBOS 2013).

In the 1990s, the law was tightened. The abortion law is regulated by the Act of 7 January 1993 on Family Planning, Protection of the Human Foetus and Conditions for Permissibility of Abortion (Dz. U. No. 17, It. 78 with amendments). Under Art. 4a, pregnancy can be terminated under four conditions:

1. when it poses a threat to the woman's health or life (which must be determined by a doctor other than the one performing the procedure);
2. when prenatal examinations or other medical tests indicate a high probability of a grave and irreversible defect of the foetus or an incurable disease posing a risk to its life (which also must be determined by a doctor other than the one performing the abortion);
3. when it is justifiably suspected that the pregnancy was caused by a criminal act (a rape or incest);
4. when the woman experiences difficult living conditions or personal situation.

In the first case, abortion is allowed until the twelfth week of pregnancy. In the two subsequent cases, the procedure is allowed until the foetus reaches the maturity allowing independent life outside the woman's body. Item four of the act, permitting termination of pregnancy on the grounds of the woman's difficult living conditions or personal situation (Szczuka 2004: 8), lost validity on 18 December 1997 under the notice of the President of the Constitutional Tribunal of 18 December 1997 on the loss of effect of Art. 1 It. 2, Art. 1 It. 5, Art. 2 It. 2, Art. 3 It. 1 and Art. 3 It. 4 of the act on family planning, protection of the human foetus and conditions for the permissibility of abortion and on the change of some other acts (Dz. U. No. 157, It. 1040), considering it inconsistent with the Constitution.

However, as far as the women's right to abortion is concerned, a lot depends on doctors, since no list of defects and impairments that might be the base for abortion has been developed so far. The general practice is that a doctor refers the pregnant woman to another doctor, who refers her to yet another one (Święchowicz 2014: 26).

In August 2016, a draft act liberalising the abortion law was submitted to the Sejm (Polish Parliament) by the initiative *Ratujmy Kobiety* [Let's Rescue Women], providing for women's right to terminate pregnancy until the twelfth week, sexual education, and contraceptive refunds. On 23 September, after the first reading, the draft act was rejected (Wprost 2016). In July, another citizens' draft act – this time prepared by the association *Ordo iuris* – was submitted to the Sejm – it was called *Stop aborcji* [Stop Abortion] and was aimed at changing the Act of 7 January 1993 on Family Planning, Protection of the Human Foetus and Conditions for the Permissibility of Abortion as well as the Act of 6 June 1997.<sup>2</sup> It provided, for instance, for the penalising of women who underwent abortion (from three months to five years of imprisonment) (Newsweek 2016). It should be added that it also contained a provision under which the court might apply an extraordinary mitigation of punishment or renounce its disposition if the mother of the "unborn child" acted unintentionally.

On 3 October 2016, the National Polish Strike of Women referred to as the Black Protest was held. On that day, thousands of women did not go to work, to protest on the streets against the idea of the restriction of the abortion law. On 6 October, the Sejm rejected the *Stop Abortion* draft act (ts/kk 2016).

The parliamentary group of the party *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* [Law and Justice] currently prepares draft regulations regulating abortion. Without any doubt, limitation of eugenic abortions will be sought (MPs most often refer to children with Down syndrome). No details were provided (p.mal 2016). One can also find information on the internet about a draft law by the Polish Federation of Life Protection Movements, which was provided to the Sejm Speaker in the form of a petition on 6 October. The document provides for a total ban on abortion, but does not penalise women for it. New postulates include a ban on the sale of abortifacients and anti-implantation drugs as well as the obligatory covering of families, single parents of disabled children and mothers and children in the case of the so-called criminal act (rape) with state institutional care (ds 2016).

### The method of interpretation of the empirical material – criticaldiscourse analysis

The empirical material was interpreted with the help of critical discourse analysis. It refers to the area of the contemporary linguistics, in which over the last 50 years there has been a clear division between research into the structure of language (formal linguistics) and research into language in use (language as a tool

<sup>2</sup> The content of the draft act is available on the website [http://www.stopaborcji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/projekt\\_2016.pdf](http://www.stopaborcji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/projekt_2016.pdf) [accessed on 16.10.2016].

of communication). On the grounds of present-day linguistics, approaches such as linguistic pragmatics (George P. Lakoff) or sociolinguistics (Basil Bernstein) enjoy high popularity. Norman Fairclough underlines that the value of these analyses lies in the exploration of language in the context of social functions (Duszak, Fairclough 2008: 12). The social sciences need an analysis of ways in which language is used, since social phenomena are a meeting point of the discursive and non-discursive. Fairclough points out that an analysis of social changes without their linguistic layer and the relation between the discursive and non-discursive is always fragmentary, or incomplete (Duszak, Fairclough 2008: 10).

Fairclough defines critical discourse analysis as a form of critical social research analysing the relations between categories of thinking – knowledge, values, imaginaries – and other elements of social systems and processes, to determine in what way the “cementing” of the former contributes to the establishment, continued existence or change of social relations, power relations, ideology, domination, hegemony, marginalization, and oppression (Duszak, Fairclough 2008). Critical discourse analysis enables the analysis of the relations between the sphere of meanings (discourse) and materiality (non-discursive sphere).

In turn, Chris Barker claims that discourses supply ways of talking about a given phenomenon, topic, or problem owing to the repetitive collections of ideas, practices, types of knowledge and motifs that relate to them (Barker 2012). Discourse can be referred to as a relatively durable map of meanings or ways of talking, owing to which objects or practices acquire meaning. Experts on critical discourse analysis argue that the ordering of meaning is a consequence of the impact exercised by authorities on the social practice area. In view of the above, discourse is treated as an element “uniting” language and practice (Barker 2012).

Critical discourse analysis seems to be interesting since its practice is not tantamount to the necessity of remaining outside the theoretical frameworks as a part of the process of the construction of the subject of research. According to David Howarth, founding research on specific theoretical frameworks only means that we are dealing with an open, flexible field ready to be reorganized during analyses (Howarth 2008: 214).

When describing the contemporary picture of women’s right to abortion in the media space, I have focused on an analysis of the language of selected pages functioning on the Facebook social medium. My analysis was aimed at an attempt at a reconstruction of recurring pictures of women’s right to abortion, common models of reacting to them, and common spheres of articulated meanings (ways of perception, evaluations). As a part of the service, users may create their own networks, groups, and – most importantly – exchange their beliefs on selected subjects (including women’s right to abortion).

## Contemporary picture in the media space of the right to abortion

At present, we may notice two orientations in the media debate on the right of women to abortion: pro-life (opponents of the women’s right to abortion) and pro-



choice (supporters of the legalization of abortion and reproductive rights). Participants include priests, professors, ethicists, publicists, and feminists. The most recognisable figures that have been taking part in the debate for many years include Agnieszka Graff, Wanda Nowicka, Kazimiera Szczuka and Magdalena Środa (pro-choice), and Bogdan Chazan, Kaja Godek and Tomasz Terlikowski (pro-life).

Initially, I analysed the content concerning abortion and comments of the users posted on two profiles created by persons actively participating in the debate concerning the liberalization of the Polish abortion law. The first one was the profile created by Kazimiera Szczuka – a social activist, feminist, and a co-founder of the association Kongres Kobiet [Congress of Women]. On 4 February 2015, Szczuka posted on her profile an interview with doctor Janusz Rudziński – a gynaecologist working at a clinic in Prenzlau, Germany, who performs abortions (also at the request of Poles who cross the border to undergo the procedure). In the interview, Rudziński described the course of an abortion and its duration, and said what German doctors think about the conscience clause. Numerous comments were posted under the material made available by the journalist. Below are some of the ones from Kazimiera Szczuka's profile<sup>3</sup>:

Murderers.

How can you call a cruel premeditated murder a "small, short procedure"... Brrr.

Yes, probably the one performed at a later stage of the child's prenatal life. There are no words to comment on such a pathetic manner of justifying killing children...

It is a pity there was no abortion earlier on. If it was, the parents of PO and Judeo-commies and SLD would have had an abortion, and there would be no socialism, no stupid Kazia and no stupid topics concerning equal rights and abortion. Since they would die a natural death.

PS. Abortion = Murder.

It is a murder. A quick murder. (Facebook: Kazimiera Szczuka 2015).

All the comments contain the word "murder" – each of the users quoted above identified abortion with a cruel, premeditated murder of a child. The internet users were shocked by the doctor's statement that abortion is a short procedure. Interestingly, one of the commentators (showing himself as an opponent of abortion) saw it as a missed chance for the prevention of the establishment of some political parties (PO, SLD), and such social problems as equality or the right to abortion (through the abortion of concrete politicians and social activists, including Kazimiera Szczuka).

The second content subjected to analysis and concerning women's right to abortion originates from the profile of Tomasz Terlikowski – a journalist, Catholic publicist, and editor-in-chief of the portal Fronda.pl and the Republika television channel. On 1 May 2015, after the announcement of a court decision of acquit-

<sup>3</sup> Highlights in quotations – A.B. The statements are provided in the original form, spelling including.

tal in the case of professor Bogdan Chazan, Terlikowski demanded in his post among other things public apologies to the professor, who refused to perform a legal abortion of a defective foetus for a patient, on the grounds of the conscience clause:

The media and political lynch performed on the heroic gynaecologist who refused to **kill a baby** only because it was disabled, has finished with a success of the **abortionists**. Prof. Bogdan Chazan, against common sense and Polish law, was not only libelled, but also dismissed from work. Now, the subsequent decisions of the prosecutor show that his dismissal was groundless, and the lynch was a classic example of gangster intimidation. If then Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz wants to maintain the minimum of honour or credibility, she should not only publicly (yes!) apologise to prof. Chazan, but also in no time bring him back to work as the hospital head. If she fails to do so, she will show – not for the very first time, by the way – that her actions are openly anti-Catholic, and that nothing has remained of her former involvement. If the professor was innocent, then the only reason behind his dismissal was his faith which the apparently faithful Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz was unable to accept (Facebook: Tomasz P. Terlikowski 2015).

Terlikowski consistently called the termination of pregnancy the “killing of a child”. He called the opponents of women’s right to abortion people guided by common sense, and he sought reasons behind the dismissal of professor Chazan from work in the anti-Catholic attitude of the authorities to the doctor’s faith.

Various comments were posted under the journalist’s message:

There is no **subjective right to abortion**. There is **the right to live** (Facebook: Tomasz P. Terlikowski 2015).

Some internet users negated women’s right to abortion, as in their opinion it does not exist. In her column, Agnieszka Graff concluded that the word “life” is a hard calibre word referring to an absolute value. In her opinion, in the face of the tyranny of the word, other words pale – including “choice”, “conscious decision”, “responsibility”, and “freedom” (Graff 2001: 120).

Another quotation again identified abortion with the “civilisation of death”:

**Killing the ill** is an interesting idea. You have just been diagnosed with a runny nose. Please give your address, our medical services are on their way to take you (Facebook: Tomasz P. Terlikowski 2015).

The internet user called abortion the killing of the (innocent) ill, while, interestingly, disregarding the problems such as grave defects of the foetus, and comparing them to a runny nose (i.e. most often a symptom of a non-dangerous infection that can be cured with various pharmacological drugs – in contrast to congenital disorders).

There were also some posts that were not clear about the evaluation of the behaviour of the doctor who refused his patient the right to a legal abortion:



Generally speaking it is all about the fact that hiding behind your **conscience**, you **may break the law** – well then I am going to stop paying my taxes, as my conscience does not allow me to do so. I'm curious what the end of the case will be then? (Facebook: Tomasz P. Terlikowski 2015).

The Facebook user pointed out that the doctor's behaviour was inconsistent with the anti-abortion law in force. However, his comparison of the right to abortion to the obligation to pay taxes by citizens does not seem right. We may say that he showed his ignorance of the existing social problem, i.e. the limitation of the availability of abortion to women, despite the fact that under the valid (restrictive) act they are entitled to it.

Female users of the social medium were the only persons paying attention to the figure of the woman in the issue in question. They underlined the importance of her conscience and the decision on the continuation or discontinuation of the pregnancy and the suffering accompanying both the woman and the newborn with a grave birth defect:

After all, it is better to **force the mother to watch her baby with such a terrible defect die for weeks on end attached to a machine**. If she had time enough to christen the child and enter him into the books of the Church, the success would be full. Anencephaly is not Down syndrome, Mister Terlikowski. We are not talking about a disability here, but about an incurable and lethal congenital defect (Facebook: Tomasz P. Terlikowski 2015).

**The termination** of this **pregnancy** should be the question of the **child's mother's conscience rather than her doctor's**. Refusing, he broke **the law** and exposed both the mother and the child to terrible suffering. He should go and fart in prison pants as an example. However, I hope that he will not find work in any public health centre (Facebook: Tomasz P. Terlikowski 2015).

In the media space created by, for example, Facebook, one may follow not only the profiles of people who make available contents concerning abortion, but also many pages on which users may express their beliefs as to the women's right to the termination of pregnancy. Pro-life pages include for instance: Aborcja to zabijanie dzieci [Abortion is killing children] (2015), Aborcja to zbrodnia [Abortion is crime] (2015), Fundacja Pro – Prawo do Życia [Foundation Pro – the Right to Live] (2015), KObiety Przeciwko Aborcji (KOPA) [Women Against Abortion] (2015), and Popieram profesora Chazana [I support Professor Chazan] (2015). The walls of all the above pages very often displayed photos of dismembered, dead fetuses, smiling or terrified children with Down syndrome (with a message "help us") or doctor Mengele with information that, after escaping from Europe, he practiced in Argentina as an abortionist. Under the posts, users described for example what abortion was in their opinion and who the women who decided to terminate pregnancy are:

**Murders, homicide, infanticide.**

**Hitler supporters.**

**holocaust** of the 21st century (Facebook: Fundacja Pro – Prawo do życia 2015).

Abortion again is called a murder, this time with reference to the history of the Holocaust and as a Hitlerian or racist practice. Agnieszka Graff wrote that the point is that the Jews murdered by the Nazis were not foetuses, but people with their own consciousness, thoughts and feelings, as well as tongue and history. This controversial metaphor seems to be right only when one fully accepts the theological definition of a human being as a being possessing a soul from conception, and when one disregards everything that differs the foetus from the child (Graff 2001:133).

Massacre. Abortion is **murdering**. What is worst is that **murdering tiny newly born children...** Only **God** can give and take **life...** no people have the right to do so!!!! (Facebook: Fundacja Pro – Prawo do życia 2015)

This comment includes Catholic rhetoric, as a part of which only God may decide about the birth and death of people. Interestingly, the internet user referred to abortion as the murdering of newly born children. It is unknown whether it is a purposeful semantic manipulation, or a symptom of ignorance, or lack of knowledge on the part of the commenting individual, since – as is commonly known – abortion is a procedure of a removal of a foetus (prenatally), and not the killing of a newborn.

Other comments were focused on criticising the women who declare their pro-choice standpoint in the abortion debate:

When I hear stupid bratty statements such as: a woman – her **body** her **choice**, I feel sick. Yes, she does have a choice – she can **choose** to protect herself, but not **murder** innocent little babies! (Facebook: Fundacja Pro – Prawo do życia 2015)

True, there are women for whom their own **convenience** is much more important than the **tiny human being** growing under their heart and it is for this **convenience** that they are ready to **kill** – sad but true (Facebook: KObiety Przeciwno Aborcji [KOPA] 2015).

The female internet users (declaring themselves as pro-life supporters) transfer responsibility for an unwanted pregnancy onto the woman, arguing that it is her obligation to protect herself. In turn, they refer to the termination of pregnancies once again as murdering innocent children (“little babies”), convenience and “bratty” (irresponsible) behaviour.

There are also pro-choice pages on Facebook, such as: Aborcja prawem kobiet [Abortion – women’s right] (2015), Prawo wyboru jest dobrem osobistym [The right to choose is a personal good] (2014), TAK! Dla legalnej aborcji w Polsce [YES! For legal abortion in Poland] (2015) or Masz prawo przerwać ciążę? Możesz to zrobić za granicą na koszt NFZ [Are you entitled to terminate pregnancy? You can do it abroad at the cost of the National Health Fund] (2015). On the pages – just like on their pro-life equivalents – images play a very important role. They show for example a clothes hanger that is crossed out (the symbol of underground abortion very often ending with the woman’s mutilation or death), a sign of inequality between a drawing of a woman and female reproductive system (manifesting that the role of the mother, the “reproducer” of the nation, is not the woman’s only

role), or a picture of Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński together with a quotation from his collection of column writings *Piekło kobiet* [Women's Hell]:

Preach lofty theories about the “**foetus's** right to live”, and threaten the mother with prison in the name of the **foetus's** rights, but at the same time fail to make sure that the carrier of the **foetus** has something to eat... And, very peculiarly, the same **foetuses**, about whom the law-providers are so concerned as long as they are still in the mother's womb, lose all the rights to legal protection but an hour after birth, and can die under a bridge out of cold, when the mother – whose “saintly” motherhood not rarely makes her a social outcast – does not have a roof over her head (Boy-Żeleński 2013: 10).

Users commented on the posts, most often describing abortion in terms of the individual woman's matter, and referred to the abortion law in force as enslavement and force:

Abortion is a **decision** of every woman, and I support it as it is better to **remove an embryo** than throw a newborn into a rubbish bin...

In the above quotation, the female internet user makes a clear distinction between an embryo and a newborn, stressing that abortion is an issue related to the woman's decision. She turned attention to the social problem much debated on in the mass media recently, i.e. infanticide.

There were also more controversial comments, describing the foetus as “something unwanted”. Importantly, the female Facebook user pointed out that unplanned (unwanted) motherhood can be a torment (problem) to the woman:

It is better to **remove something unwanted** than spend the rest of life in misery.

Female internet users (declaring themselves to be pro-choice) called abortion the termination of pregnancy, and a consequence of the individual choice of every woman, thus stressing in what way women are treated by the state (enslavement and enforcement):

Everyone should have the right to choose. Every woman should have the possibility to terminate her pregnancy until its 12th week in safe conditions. Whether she uses the opportunity, it is her individual business. And what the government does and what it wants to do... This is enslavement and enforcement!

I think that it is an individual business of every human being, one's own conscience. To have the right to do something does not mean to have to use it. I want to live in a free country in which I have the right to make certain individual decisions. Maybe in a while someone will strike upon an idea to ban wiping one's nose. Because more human tissue is damaged in the process than during in vitro.

Abortion is a choice, and life offers some difficult and very difficult situations; everyone should have access to all the possible solutions and use them in consistence with their beliefs...

The realities are that a woman with a foetus with a genetic defect is forced to carry her pregnancy until the 20th-21st week (this is how long you have to wait for your test results), and then the “abortion” of the already moving foetus is an induced premature labour. Is this humane towards the woman???

## How do we talk about abortion?

The social problem of women’s right to abortion is both controversial and delicate. According to data provided by the CBOS public opinion research centre, Poles’ opinions on abortion are divided:

Every other adult Pole (50%) is against the right to abortion, but only every seventh respondent supports a total ban on pregnancy termination (14%), and more than one third of the respondents (36%) believe that there should be exceptions to it. At the same time, almost a half of the respondents (45%) believe that abortion should be allowed. In this group, 7% of the respondents declare their support for unlimited pregnancy termination, and 38% support some limitations (CBOS 2010).

As can be noticed on the basis of the above-quoted comments, which were posted under Kazimiera Szczuka’s or Tomasz Terlikowski’s posts, as well as on pro-life and pro-choice pages, the language used by both environments to describe abortion is radically different. Opponents of the women’s right to abortion define the issue as murder, homicide, infanticide, and even Holocaust. On the other hand, supporters of the legalisation of abortion treat it as a procedure of the termination of a pregnancy and describe it in terms of a decision, the right to choose, and every woman’s individual business. The two environments also differ as to the description of the being developing in the woman’s womb – for pro-life supporters, the being is a child, a little human being, but according to their opponents, it is an embryo or foetus, depending on the stage of pregnancy. Very often in their comments, the users of the pro-life pages referred to the figure of God, as the only one who can give or take human life. On the other hand, the users of the pro-choice pages believed that divine (religious) law may not stand above secular law. The abortion law in force in Poland, which is among the most restrictive in Europe, is also understood in different categories. According to the supporters of restricting the anti-abortion act, it is convenient for women, while for their adversaries it is tantamount to a forced maintenance of unwanted pregnancies and giving birth to unplanned children.

Summing up, the ambiguous, unclear and contradictory words defining abortion in the media space create a linguistic “women’s hell”. The ambivalent language results from the impossibility to balance the definitions of abortion offered by pro-life environments with those used by pro-choice environments, such as murder/decision, homicide/right to choose, convenience/compulsion.

More than ten years ago, Agnieszka Graff stated that it is impossible to talk when each of the parties defines the gist of the debate in different categories. From the point of view of supporters of women’s right to choose, “humanity from con-

Table 1. Selected words defining abortion as used by pro-life and pro-choice environments

Pro-life	Pro-choice
murder	decision
homicide	right to choose
infanticide	termination of pregnancy
Holocaust	individual matter
baby	foetus
tiny human being	embryo
God	Law
convenience	compulsion

Source: author's own research

ception" is absurd, a rhetorical trick, a tool of emotional blackmail. Quoting Bożena Umińska, Graff stressed that the insurmountable problem lies in the difference of attitudes, mentality and the definition of what is a human being without the perception of a difference between a fertilised human cell, a foetus, a newborn, and an adult. What for some is the right to personal freedom, is a murder for others (Graff 2001: 114).

For this reason answering the question whether or not the contemporary picture of women's right to abortion in the media space is the case of their enslavement or emancipation, is a very difficult task. It will possibly remain without a clear answer for a long time to come.

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### Summary

*Women's hell – the contemporary picture in the media space of the right to abortion.  
The case of enslavement or emancipation of women?*

The article aims at analysing the language and word choice on selected Facebook pages discussing women's right to abortion. The fairly rigorous law, the nature of public discourse, and the activity of the pro-choice movement striving to change the existing legislation, make the topic of abortion function in the sphere of the taboo.

### Keywords

abortion, pregnancy termination, foetus, woman, reproductive rights, feminism





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## Dream-based diagnosis of the psyche

### 1. Beginnings of the psychotherapeutic analysis and interpretation of dreams – Freud's psychoanalysis

#### 1.1. Scientific foundations of psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud is the creator of the psychoanalysis and interpretation of dreams and a forefather of psychotherapy. When developing the theory of the treatment of neuroses, the Austrian neurologist concluded that their source lies in the unconscious. He considered dreams the "royal way" to this realm (Freud 1952).

Psychoanalysis was based on doctrines of the 19th century science (Hobson, McCarley 1977). Freud assumed, *inter alia*, that the body is a complex system drawing energy from the world through nourishment and returning it back to the environment via performed actions. He also believed, following his contemporary neurophysiology, in the mind/body isomorphism, assuming that the mind and the body are one substance taking different forms. When constructing his theory, he additionally used the principles of energy conservation. On this basis, he assumed that energy does not vanish, but only changes form. In view of the described assumptions, Freud's concept of the human psyche is simultaneously mechanistic and deterministic (Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998). Hence, the constant dispute with Freud's classical psychoanalysis in academic papers is a considerable misunderstanding, since its rudiments have been obsolete for many years now.

The theoretical foundations adopted by Freud resulted in the following consequences for psychoanalysis:

1. the assumption that the energy used by the body and the energy moving the mind are the same type of energy originating from nourishment;
  2. the assumption that the energy "annexed" by the psyche must find its outlet (the energy conservation principle provides that it cannot simply disappear).
- I shall return to these threads further on.

#### 1.2. The structural model of the human mind and dreams

Contemporary researchers noticed that descriptions of the human psyche according to Freud can be divided into five different meta-theories (Drat-Ruszczak

2000). One of them assumes a division of the psyche into three structures: the id, the ego and the superego.

The id (“it”) is a reservoir of mental energy. It is there that the energy of the body is transformed into mental energy. The id is the place of origin of the two basic types of mental energy that need to be discharged: the libido (creative, affiliative, sexual energy) and the destrudo (energy of destruction, separation, and alienation) (Drozdowski, Kokoszka 1993). The id’s task is to satisfy the body’s needs in their most primary form. If this is impossible in the physical world, the id performs an imaginary satisfaction of needs by hallucinating its experience (Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998). For example, a starving person without access to food daydreams of eating (Freud 2012). In this way, he/she “satisfies” the need in the only accessible way (Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998). The id is entirely unconscious.

The super-ego (“super-self”) contains norms the individual acquired in the course of the socialization process. It is unreflective and acts automatically. People can become aware of a part of their super-ego.

The ego (“self”) is an organisation controlling the entire human psyche. It is partly in the conscious, and partly in the unconscious. Its main task is to reconcile the id’s needs with the requirements of reality and the standards of the super-ego. It is important not to connect the ego with self-awareness and self-identity. These constructs are dealt with to a larger extent by the more contemporary schools of psychoanalysis such as the psychology of the self (cf. Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998).

As results from the above, dreams are born from the id – just like every other mental act. However, a major role in their creation is also played by the censorship related to the superego (Freud 2012).

### 1.3. Dreamwork

In Freud’s concept, dreams are the guardians of peaceful sleep. The id’s needs outside sleep are controlled by the ego and the superego. During one’s sleep, the two “higher” instances become weakened and the id has a much greater influence (Freud 2012). According to Freud, it demands during sleep that its needs be satisfied and a dream is the aforementioned hallucinated satisfaction of a need (Freud 1952, 2012). However, why is this satisfaction often so non-obvious? Freud believes that dreams in many cases are to satisfy socially-unaccepted impulses – sexual or aggressive ones. A dream must hide the satisfaction of such impulses from the sleeping person so that the strong emotions related to the non-accepted wish do not break the undisturbed relaxation. This happens via the dreamwork, in which Freud identifies the following mechanisms:

- condensation – aimed at the compression of many threads or items into one (Vedfelt 1999). For example, a dreaming person may see in their dream an unknown little boy, feeling that they are both their uncle and father. Condensation – apart from its economic function – also conceals some meanings by mixing them;

- dramatisation – consists in giving the dream a dramatic form, “clothing” desires, impulses and thoughts in the form of events;
- displacement – is a change of accent during a dream. It is to displace the pressure of the dream from socially unacceptable contents so that they remain even more illegible. If – in consistence with Freud’s concept – a given person would dream of sex, then, through censorship, not only would sex be replaced with some other rhythmical action, such as walking up a ladder (cf. Freud 2012), but possibly the accent would be shifted from walking up the ladder to something else – for example the person would see a dragon flying towards them, and the climbing itself would not be as important;
- secondary revision – according to Freud, this mechanism is not present in all dreams. Its task is to provide a topic for the entire dream and combine its scenes so that they create one “sound” whole.

The entire dreamwork transforms the concealed content (the real content of processes of the human psyche when we sleep) into an open content – not necessarily a version which is logical and rational, but one that is socially-acceptable and does not awake the sleeper.

#### 1.4. Summary and conclusions

Summing up – Freud believed that dreams are guardians of the restful sleep of the man troubled by the constant desires of the insatiable id. They fulfil their function through a hallucinated satisfaction of the desires and – if these are socially unacceptable – through concealing them from the dreamer via dreamwork.

Currently, the value of Freud’s dream theory is mainly historical. The theory was developed in other socio-psychological conditions, on the basis of obsolete theories from the area of the natural sciences. Its value in the determination of the real properties of the human psyche is scant and not proved (Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998).

## 2. Further development of psychoanalytical concepts of the dream

### 2.1. Jung’s analytical psychology

One of the most developed theories of the interpretation of dreams was created by Carl Gustav Jung, a student of Freud’s. The Austrian psychiatrist was one of the first persons who broke with Freud. The offshoot developed by Jung is referred to as analytical psychology (Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998).

#### 2.1.1. Structure of the psyche according to Jung

Carl Gustav Jung believed that the human psyche contains biological elements, common to all people, which result from the history of the species (Dudek

2007; Jung 1968). He called them archetypes. Apart from them, there exists a part of the mind marking each particular individual, but the psychologist devoted less attention to this. The archetypes that can be most often observed in people's daily functioning or in dreams are the Shadow, the Persona, the Anima, and the Animus.

According to Jung, the Persona is a mechanism resulting from evolution, which was developed since in society people can never be "themselves" (Jung 1981). The father of analytical psychology believed that the compulsion of the repeatable putting on of "masks" for entire generations caused them, by way of evolution, to become an element of our natural endowment. In our daily life, the Persona manifests itself in behaviour and thoughts that accompany us during the presence of others, although they would be alien to us when alone. In dreams, the Persona can be featured symbolically as a mask, fancy dress, "being somebody else" (not oneself), etc.

The Shadow is tantamount to animal drives and the socially unaccepted mental contents with which we do not identify ourselves. It is often dark, aggressive or even demonic and manifests in dreams in this way – as persons, animals or supernatural beings that are dangerous to the dreamer (Dudek 2007; Vedfelt 1999). In behaviour, it manifests itself as the unwanted and repressed pursuits or thoughts one is ashamed of as soon as they are thought.

The Animus / the Anima are gender archetypes. According to Jung, healthy men identify themselves with their Animus, while their Anima remains in the unconscious; healthy women identify themselves with the Anima, and the Animus is unconscious. Outside of dreams, these archetypes manifest themselves accordingly by behaviours typical for men (decidedness, aggression, expansiveness) and women (submissiveness, agreeableness, caring attitude). It should be stressed that Jung created his theory on the basis of various works of culture, philosophy, and texts related to magic and alchemy (Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998). Thus, it does not have to remain consistent with the findings of social psychology and sociology (in particular ones following the gender approach) indicating negative results of stereotyping (cf. Wojciszke 2012).

The Self is another important archetype – although it is rarely noticed in dreams and behaviour. According to Jung, it is the archetype of the human completeness every soul strives to attain. This goal is implemented through the process of individuation (Dudek 2007; Jung 1980; Vedfelt 1999). Individuation starts for good at about the fiftieth year of life. It is then that people begin to dream archetypal dreams picturing the human road to the achievement of a full life.

### 2.1.2. Principles of the interpretation of dreams

Jung codified the principles of dream interpretation as a part of analytical psychology (Vedfelt 1999). Dreams should be perceived as Greek dramas. Dreams are composed of:

1. exposition, i.e. time, place, and participants of the dream;
2. complication, i.e. development of action;

3. climax – the culmination point involving either a positive solution or a catastrophe;
4. lysis – the end of a dream and the completion of its action.

Exposition and complication present the problem being the topic of the dream, while climax and lysis indicate possibilities for navigating through the described problem and suggest ways in which it can be solved.

According to Jung, dreams may have a reductive and a prospective aspect. The former refers to the past and interpretation through these lenses is aimed at identifying which past events determined the dream. The prospective aspect, which was of much more interest to the father of analytical psychology himself, is directed towards the future. It indicates the present forces in the human being, which try to change his/her situation.

For the effective interpretation of dreams, Jung recommended the analysis of their context. For this purpose, he used the method of association, with a given element of the dream or its amplification.

The association method consists in the simple saying of what a given person associates with an element of a dream standing in the centre of the analyst's interest, whereas the amplification method consists in the creation of a symbolic context for the dream element in question – searching for symbols connected with the individual's own experience, cultural life, as well as the general human context – one that is archetypal (cf. Vedfelt 1999).

An important constituent of a good interpretation of a dream also included a determination whether the persons present in the dream are elements of the dreamer's personality (a subjective plan) or the picturing of real persons from one's environment (an objective plan).

Objective interpretation is normally used when the person in the dream is a significant individual for the dreamer. It is similar with the persons who are not necessarily important, but the relationship with whom is very emotional. The same principle is most often applied to persons who appear in the dream very clearly and in detail.

When the person from the dream is not very significant or not at all related to the dreamer, subjective interpretation is applied. It is also used when the protagonist is distorted or changed. These principles are formed generally and can be broken if the other elements of the context indicate a different type of interpretation.

The ultimate checking of the dream interpretation is its verification. Jung suggests several methods by which this can be performed. First of all, dreams should be interpreted in series, not individually. If subsequent dreams dreamt within a short time confirm the interpretation, it is sound. If not, a new framework should be created to connect all the dreams in the series (Dudek 2007; Vedfelt 1999).

The justness of the interpretation can also be confirmed by – as Ole Vedfelt put it – the dreamer's sense of it all falling into place upon hearing the interpretation. The dreamer simply feels that the interpretation is right.

Yet another means of verification happens when the interpretation suggested by the therapist leads to concrete results in the dreamer's life.

### 2.1.3. Summary and conclusions

Jung created a completely different school of therapy than his teacher, Freud – one that used dreams in a dissimilar way. It was focused on interpretations concerning the future of the dreamer, development of their soul and examination of what the unconscious wanted to communicate to the dreamer in their dream.

The theory developed by Jung is still willingly used by neo-Jungians. The vivid, intuitively described archetype can be seen not only in dreams, but also in broadly understood behaviour. It is, then, possible to attempt a determination of the dreamer's psychic properties on the basis of the Jungian dream diagnosis.

However, Jungians do not acknowledge academic methods of examining their theories. Also, the theories are constructed in such a way that they escape experimental approaches (Dudek 2007; Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998). Therefore, the neo-Jungian approaches to the interpretation of dreams originating from individual psychology have mainly a therapeutic rather than a diagnostic value.

## 2.2. Individual psychology

Another student who left Freud to develop his own school of therapy was Alfred Adler (Hall, Lindzey, Campbell 1998). He created the concept of individual psychology, which focused on the lifestyle marking a given individual and being their way of escaping from the unavoidable sense of inferiority. In contrast to his mentor – and many of his students – Adler considered consciousness the centre of human personality.

### 2.2.1. Interpretation of dreams in individual psychology

According to Adler, dreams are the continuation of waking life, reflecting the same unique personality of the individual which leaves its stamp on their daily life. He simultaneously suggested that in their dreams, people try to solve problems they have not managed to solve outside sleep (Doweiko 1982; Lombardi, Elcock 1997; Vedfelt 1999).

According to Adler, dreams also reflect elements of a given person's lifestyle: their private logic and private reason, and support dreamers in their opposing the requirements of life in society (Doweiko 1982; Lombardi, Elcock 1997).

The interpretation of dreams in individual psychology is based on the giving of meaning to symbols present in dreams together with the dreamer (Lombardi, Elcock 1997).

## 3. Contemporary basis of the dream science

Psychoanalysis originates from the 19th century science, whereas the concepts of therapy and dreams discussed in the second part hereof are directly based on

psychoanalysis. The discoveries I shall discuss in this part lie at the foundation of the contemporary concepts of dreams.

### 3.1. Chronobiology

It was as early as in 1932 that Eugene Aserinsky and Nathaniel Kleitman discovered that dreams are phenomena that have phases (Borbély 1984; Zimbardo 2001; Zimbardo, Johnson, McCann 2012). The two phases are: REM (*Rapid Eye Movement*) and NREM (*Non Rapid Eye Movement*). During the first, the dreamers' eyes move very rapidly, while their body does not move. The second phase is the relaxation of the body and slow movements of the eyes.

Present-day chronopsychology provides that sleep is a mesogenous rhythm. Endogenous rhythms are related to our biology. They only adjust to the external environment, but are not determined by them. The exogenous rhythms are determined by the external environment, and they are an effect of learning. The sleep/wake rhythm is marked by qualities of both these rhythms (Ciarkowska 2015). On the one hand, it is indispensable for the survival of the human body, and belongs to the biological heritage. In this way, it is an endogenous rhythm. On the other hand, it is largely determined by social life, occupation, and even the volitional change of habits, which brings it closer to exogenous rhythms. It is now believed that the REM stage cycle is more primary.

### 3.2. Neurology

In 1977, J. Allan Hobson and Robert McCarley described the activation-synthesis hypothesis being a contemporary basis for dream theory. The hypothesis provides that during the REM stage, the provision of external stimuli is limited. However, the brain remains under the influence of the chaotic stimulation originating from the brainstem. As aforementioned, during the REM stage, the body of the sleeping person remains immobile, but the muscles continue to be stimulated by neural connections. The optic nerves are also stimulated. The described neuromuscular activation is connected with memory traces, which fit best to it. In this way, dreams are formed.

### 3.3. Summary

The latest dream theories are based on the discoveries of modern science. One of the grounds for them is the regularity of sleep determined by the mesogenous sleep-wake rhythm. Another is the neurological foundations indicating that dreams are based on chaotic impulsation from the brainstem that stimulates the brain, muscles, and optic nerves.

Hobson and McCarley's work does not provide any dream interpretation framework, but the researchers do not exclude that other theories may discover the sense of dreams (Hobson, McCarley 1977).



#### 4. Cognitive understanding of dreams

The interpretation of dreams – although associated mainly with psychoanalysis and the psychotherapy school related to it – was also present at the birth of the cognitive therapy (Rosner 2004). Aaron Beck, one of the fathers of the approach, tried to promote this diagnostic technique also on this ground. However, due to the alliances of cognitive therapists with behavioural therapists, who were not supporters of dream interpretation, as well as the arduousness and troublesomeness of the exploration of dreams, he finally discontinued his work in this scope.

Beck believed that dreams are a biopsy of the dreamer's cognitive processes, presenting, in a manner exaggerated in relation to the daily life, various mistakes that are indispensable for the human cognitive system – ones that cognitive and cognitive-behavioural therapy tries to eliminate or reduce (putting it in largely simplified terms) (Padesky, Greenberger 2004).

Contemporarily, the topic of the interpretation of dreams in the cognitive paradigm was explored by Harold Doweiko. Taking Alfred Adler's theory as a basis, Doweiko determined that the individual reason and the private reason described by the creator of individual psychology are nothing else but a "cognitive set" of the dreamers i.e., in simple terms – similarly to Aaron Beck's approach – whatever is responsible for all the cognitive mistakes also when we are awake (Doweiko 1982). After adding the contemporary neurology to the above (cf. 3.2.), Doweiko assumed that the cognitive set is to interpret the chaotic impulses from the brainstem and bodily tensions. This allows to better see in dreams what concrete cognitive mistakes are most suffered by a given person and lie at the base of their problems, and which ones cause mood changes after waking up. Doweiko believes that our moods are determined by our dreams (Doweiko 2004).

In view of the ease of the operationalization of cognitive theories and their strong grounding in scientific concepts on the basis of Doweiko and Beck's reflections, I carried out a study focusing on the identification of dreamers' beliefs. Its results suggest that the procedure can be effective (cf. Dąbrowski 2015). The study allows to believe that the cognitive paradigm of the interpretation of dreams offers both benefits that are pragmatic (assistance in psychotherapy), and theoretical (indicators that are easy to operationalize and measure), thus allowing us to come closer to the gist of dreams. The topic calls for further research and, hopefully, this paper will successfully encourage the readers to pursue it.

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## Summary

### *Dream-based Diagnosis of the Psyche*

The domains of dreams and imagination are close to one another. This article discusses if it is possible to identify real psychological traits on the basis of dreams.

The following dream theories are discussed: classical psychoanalytical theory, Carl Jung's analytical psychology, Alfred Adler's individual psychology, and the cognitive theories of Aaron Beck and Harold Doweiko. Their presentation is supplemented with neuropsychological and chronobiological approaches.

## Keywords

dream, sleep, psychotherapy, psychology

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## The right to be forgotten – a right in the digital world

The Internet is a tool of communication accumulating an uncountable quantity of information that never disappears from its surface. This also applies to the information which becomes obsolete over time. In the context of the basic rights of individuals – such as personal data protection – this is an issue of the most basic significance. How can the law be adjusted to technological change?

In the age of the development of information society, not only European law providers have to deal with the problem of personal data protection. Once uploaded to the internet, information ceases to be controlled by the subject which uploaded it. This results from the technological nature of the internet as a network of autonomously connected computers constituting independently operating nodes. The advocate general turns attention to the above in his opinion concerning case C-131/12 *Google Spain and Google vs Agencia Española de Protección de Datos (AEPD)*. As a part of this case, prejudicial questions were directed to the Court of Justice in connection with a dispute between Google and Google Spain on the one side, and a Spanish data protection body (AEPD) and a Spanish citizen on the other. The dispute was related to requiring Google Spain and Google to take indispensable measures to withdraw personal data from their index and prevent further access to them. The case concerned information on the seizure of a real estate due to unpaid social insurance premiums that was published in a popular Spanish daily in 1998. The person whose data were published was mentioned as the owner. At a later date, the publisher made an electronic version of the newspaper available on the internet. After eleven years, the person contacted the newspaper publisher, claiming that after entering his name and address into the Google search engine, a reference to the newspaper pages containing the announcement of the real estate auction is shown. The data subject claimed that despite the fact that the seizure order was concluded and resolved years ago, the announcement continued to be shown in search results. Responding to the request, the publisher stated that the removal of data was not appropriate, since the publication was legally justified. The data subject asked Google Spain to prevent further links to the newspaper with the announcements to be generated in search results when his name is entered. The request was forwarded to Google Inc. in California, which provides internet search services.

Then the data subject asked AEPD to oblige the publisher to remove his personal data or change the publication in such a way that his personal data are not

shown. He also demanded that Google be obliged to remove or hide his personal data so that they are not linked to the auction announcement. The Spanish Personal Data Protection Agency admitted the complaint from the data subject and demanded that Google Spain SL and Google Inc. withdraw his data from their indexes (lists). However, the body held that the information on the auction published in the newspaper must be kept in view of its legal justification. Google Spain and Google Inc. submitted two appeals against the decision, demanding that it be annulled.<sup>1</sup>

The judges collected all their doubts encountered while analysing the request in nine questions.<sup>2</sup> The court understood that the complaint concerns the problem of the personal data protection-related obligations of the entities handling internet search engines. Individuals may not wish for certain information published on websites of third parties, containing their personal data and allowing to identify them, to be uploaded, indexed, and made available to the internet users indefinitely.

The first doubt of the judges concerned the territorial application of Community and national regulations pertaining to the protection of personal data. Do they apply in this case, or – as Google argues – should data subjects turn to the court of law in California, where the parent company is seated?

The Court also asked whether, while indexing information, search engines process personal data, and whether they are responsible for their processing and in view of this fact should abide by individuals' right to having their data withdrawn and/or lodging an objection, although the information is kept in the original sources since it has been considered legal.

Finally, the judges asked the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) whether personal data protection applies when a given individual objects to the indexing and dissemination of information which concerns them, despite it being legal and precise at its source, since they consider it negative or harmful to themselves (Europa Praw Człowieka 2012).

## A characteristic of the internet

All contents in the form of texts or audiovisual materials, including personal data, can be readily and permanently available globally in the digital format. The internet revolutionised our life, removing technical and institutional barriers

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<sup>1</sup> Opinion of the advocate general Niil Jääsinen presented on 25.06.2013, case C-131/12, <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=138782&pageIndex=0&doclang=PL&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=305413> [accessed on 23.11.2015].

<sup>2</sup> Reference for a preliminary ruling made by Audiencia Nacional (Spain) on 9 March 2012 – Google Spain, S.L., Google, Inc. vs Agencia de Protección de Datos (AEPD), Mario Costeja González (case C-131/12), <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=123131&doclang=PL> [accessed on 23.11.2015].

to the dissemination and reception of information.<sup>3</sup> Information should be free<sup>4</sup> and publicly available, and anything that hinders the freedom should be omitted. These barriers include authorities, bureaucracy, and discrimination.

The above understanding of the freedom of information is a challenge to the law-makers. The subject uploading information to the internet loses control over it. The autonomy of information is a constitutive feature of the internet. The relationship between the information and its author is levelled. In their autonomy, messages are disseminated regardless of the intentions of the person who posts them. It is impossible to keep control over this independent, non-hierarchized network. Control is effective when a structure has strong features characteristic for hierarchy. If there is no hierarchy to a structure, control is limited or utterly impossible. Case C-131/12 is symptomatic for information society. This results from two basic premises. The first one concerns the protection of personal data that is guaranteed by the EU law. The second premise concerns the freedom to conduct business. We are dealing with a conflict between two equally important values.

In the case of the internet, we need to identify three situations related to personal data:

- the first one concerns the publication of personal data on any website;
- in the second one, the search engine shows search results leading the internet user to the source website;
- in the third situation, the user searches through a search engine, and some of their personal data, including his IP address, are transferred to the provider of the search services<sup>5</sup>.

Responding to the above three issues by the law- and decision makers is of key importance for the determination of the principles of functioning of one of the most basic tools of the internet society, i.e. search engines. The case *Google vs AEPD and Mario Costeja González* is unprecedented. It is the first case brought to the Court of Justice including a request for an interpretation of the directives on the protection of personal data in the context of internet search engines. From the legal point of view, the implementation of new technologies stepping beyond borders and time

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<sup>3</sup> Opinion of the advocate general Niil Jääsinen presented on 25.06.2013.

<sup>4</sup> Freedom is understood as an unrestrained access, and absence of institutional and technical barriers limiting information. "Distortion is inscribed into the very laws of optics. The lens always makes a selection, shows a snapshot of reality, which, through the mechanism of enlargement, acquires the features of the entire picture. The viewer is convinced that the whole of that world looks so. It is an example showing that complete disinformation can be practiced in the world full of information" (Wang 2001: 11). "On the one hand, information wants to be expensive, because it's so valuable. The right information in the right place just changes your life. On the other hand, information wants to be free, because the cost of getting it out is getting lower and lower all the time. So you have these two fighting against each other" (Anderson 2009). What is important in Anderson's quotation is the grasping of the economic relationship between the world of ideas and technology. Using an anthropomorphic metaphor with reference to information, implying that it might have desires rather than a political attitude (information "wants to be" rather than "should be") suggests the freedom of the information marking powers of nature (see: Anderson 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Opinion of the advocate general Niil Jääsinen presented on 25.06.2013.

limits, developed after the present regulations were adopted, calls for a new interpretation of personal data protection regulations. But what should it be like?

### Positions and opinions in the course of the procedure

The advocate general seeks an answer to this question, weighing the rights guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and placing on one of the scales of justice the right of respect to private and family life of which the right to personal data protection is a part, and putting on the other one the freedom of speech of website publishers and persons publishing on the internet as well as the internet users' right to information, which in the light of the growing tendency of authoritarian regimes to censure contents deserves – according to the advocate general – special protection in the EU law. He adds to this the right to conduct business enjoyed by the providers of search services (Europa Praw Człowieka 2013).

Search engines are among the basic tools used on the internet. The popularity of the search engine seems to demand reflection on the functioning of the tool in the context of the legal protection of personal goods. Such a reflection is necessary to make sure that subjects functioning in the digital space have access to their data, can modify them as necessary and withdraw them. Such a solution is provided in the draft regulations presented by the European Commission (European Commission 2012b). On 25 January 2012, the European Commission presented draft amendments to EU data protection regulations adopted in 1995. The proposed changes are to strengthen the right to privacy on the internet inter alia by obliging all subjects offering services on the internet to manage data in a more transparent way. The new draft regulations provide that data can be withdrawn and no longer disseminated if one of the following premises takes place:

- data are no longer necessary for the purposes for which they were collected;
- the data subject revokes their consent on which the processing of the data is based, or the period during which the data were to be stored under their consent has passed, or there is no longer any legal basis for the processing of the data;
- the data subject is opposed to the processing of their personal data;
- the data processing is inconsistent with the regulation (European Commission 2012a).

The amendment of personal data protection law takes into account the technological change that has taken place in the society, as well as the possibilities it provides in the area of access to personal data. Some member states have a critical attitude to the European Commission's amendments, arguing that the suggested solutions will be too much of a burden for entrepreneurs.

Also, the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) indicates in its report that technical obstacles may have a negative effect on the legal

solutions proposed by the European Commission as regards the right to be forgotten – in particular wherever this concerns high volumes of data.

For any reasonable interpretation of the right to be forgotten, a purely technical and comprehensive solution to enforce the right on the open internet is generally impossible. An interdisciplinary approach is needed and policy makers should be aware of this fact. [...] A related question is how aggregated and derived forms of information (e.g. statistics) should be affected when some of the raw data from which statistics are derived are forgotten. Removing forgotten information from all aggregated or derived forms may present a significant technical challenge (Druschel, Backes, Tirtea 2011: 7 and 11).

The deletion of images and posts visible to the general public is basically problem-free. The situation becomes more complex when we are dealing with high volumes of data– for example, when the information we want to delete was used in an analysis and permanent access to the data is necessary.

According to ENISA, the main problem of the regulation is its too excessive approach. The regulation does not cater for example for who has the right to be forgotten, and what sort of information the above may apply to. A vagueness of personal data definitions was also pointed out, describing the data as information that can be clearly connected with a possibility to identify a given natural person. The definition that is necessary to effectively exercise the right to be forgotten is insufficiently clear.

However, they [definitions] leave to interpretation whether it [data] includes information that can be used to identify a person with high probability but not with certainty, e.g. a picture of a person or an account of a person's history, actions or performance. Neither is it clear whether it includes information that identifies a person not uniquely, but as a member of a more or less small set of individuals, such as a family (Druschel, Backes, Tirtea 2011: 6).

According to critics, the suggested changes were formulated too extensively, which may disproportionately burden data controllers. This standpoint was taken by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), who, while positively assessing the proposal of the introduction of the right to be forgotten, thinks it necessary to define its scope more precisely (Hustinx 2012). EDPS admits that the suggested changes include more realistic obligations to exercise best effort rather than obligations as to results. Moreover, EDPS believes that the suggested solution introduces on controllers the obligation to inform every recipient to whom data were disclosed about any amendment, correction, or deletion of the data. The exception to this is when such information requires an impossible or disproportionate effort. Hence, the article stressed that personal data controllers shall not be obliged to carry out insurmountable tasks. According to EDPS, in order to ensure that the right to be forgotten is effective, the draft regulation needs to be made more concrete.



Unclear phrases such as “all reasonable steps” shall require further interpretation that may define the scope of the right.

What is interesting is the position of the Polish government in this case. Piotr Waglowski (2012) insightfully pointed out that what can be seen in its context is another constitutive feature of the information society – access to public information. In this concrete case, it was only possible to become acquainted with the position of the Polish government in the aspect of the key importance for the information society under the pressure of a non-governmental organisation. In relation to the main question concerning the right to be forgotten and the obligation imposed on search engines, the Polish government did not adopt a clear position. At the beginning, a search engine was defined as “a programme or internet website designed to facilitate the search for information to users. It processes various data, including the personal data of network users” (Majczyna, Szpunar 2012). The government expresses a belief that the functioning of search engines consisting in locating information published or included on the net by third parties, indexing it automatically, storing it temporarily and finally making it available to internet users according to a particular order of preference, when that information contains personal data of third parties, is considered data processing as understood in Art. 2 let. b) of directive 95/46/EC.

### Legal and social doubts

The Spanish case showed a number of doubts in the area of personal data protection and the right to be forgotten. These doubts largely concern the functioning of search engines, including the collection of data on users and privacy policy. Controversies concern the duration of data storage and the possibility to connect them with the identity of a person. Another problem is the basic functioning of search engines, i.e. the provision of search lists. This function raises serious concerns in the context of the right to be forgotten. The subject is all the more controversial as in order to be able to fulfil their basic function, search engines must index websites. In practice, this is tantamount to the copying of website contents by dedicated applications to facilitate the users’ search for content. In the context of the discussion on the practical consequences of the right to be forgotten, a question arises whether one may demand a deletion of unfavourable or obsolete information from search results that appear after one enters someone’s full name (Smętek, Warso 2012).

In the case in question, there is one more issue worth analysis. It concerns important information, in particular sensitive material, which should not be available after some time. Criminal law distinguishes the so-called “spent conviction”, and Michał Ilnicki recalls its meaning as: “[...] a solution aimed at eliminating legal and social consequences of conviction, thus making normal life possible for the convicted person, who over a time period required by law complied with the legal order”



(Ilnicki 2014: 135). When information dispersed on the internet begins to – using a colloquialism – almost live its own life, the term spent conviction can hardly be applied. There is no single person or institution responsible for supervision over information. In the case in question, it is neither (until the Court of Justice delivers its judgement) the newspaper, which published information that was true, nor the search engine. The model of information distribution has changed. Technological development has resulted in changing the concept of time, which ceased to have a linear dimension. We may imagine the situation in the pre-internet era. A newspaper publishes information on an auction. The information is available as long as the copies of the newspaper remain on sale – we may assume that it is limited. The information is then stored in archives visited only by interested individuals. The information on the internet is available all the time and it is difficult to locate it, and thus to delete or block it. For this reason, its longevity causes various effects that are distant in time. Information once referring to the reality, may be used against the person it concerned in future. To describe this phenomenon, Ilnicki uses the category of “post-defamation”:

I shall use the word “post-defamation” with reference to information which upon publication cannot be objectively considered as defaming. However, as the information remains valid over time, it causes excessive stigmatisation of its subject (Ilnicki 2014: 135).

The Spanish case is an example of post-defamation. The protection of personal goods is cumulative, since it is guaranteed by European regulations – such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and, in Poland, by the Constitution (Art. 47) and the Criminal Code (Art. 212 discussing defamation) (Ilnicki 2014: 136). For this reason, the protection of personal goods should be guaranteed regardless of the society’s technological possibilities. Technological development should be followed by the law-making activity providing effective protection of the basic rights.

Erasing memory has considerable social consequences. On the one hand, we are terrified to see how the internet “fails to forget”, but on the other, we sometimes are not aware of the fragility of digital information. The digital memory exists for as long as we are able to read the information it contains. Today, we would find it hard to read information on a diskette, be it because of it being hard to find the appropriate equipment or software enabling the reading of data. Trusting technology, we entrust our data to companies providing cloud services, believing that the data will be safe and kept permanently there (Moglen 2013: 129).

The case of the court decision extends beyond the discussion on the freedom of expression and the possibility of influencing digital reality. This also applies to socially and culturally significant norms regulating the issues of memory as an important element of the collective and the individual identity, and the right to be forgotten and forgiven.

## Content of the decision

All the above doubts and suggestions are unimportant in the face of the decision of the Court of Justice. But what does that decision really concern and how should it be interpreted?

The Court of Justice decided that the operator of a search engine not only processes personal data, but also is their controller – i.e. a subject determining goals and means of data processing. Hence, the operator is obliged to meet the requirements burdening data controllers and resulting from the regulations of Directive 95/46/EC. Moreover, the Court of Justice concluded that Google Inc., despite being a company under American law, is subject to the requirements of the EU law, since Google Spain, its subsidiary, conducts business in the territory of Spain.

What exactly did the Court of Justice order Google to do? What exactly must the “disappearance from the search engine” involve? What is new about it and what impact can it have?

Certainly the answer to the above questions is not that everyone has the right to erase their history from search engines. The Court of Justice did not order that data must be removed from the internet, either. The right to be forgotten in the version suggested by the CJEU boils down to the possibility to correct the manner in which the search engine connects personal data contained in a query with answers. Hence, if we prove that some concrete information should not be linked to our full name (as it is fake, obsolete, or there is no longer any public interest in it being published), search engines should change the way it is indexed and no longer provide the result in answer to the query containing our personal data. Such an interference does not affect the availability of the information: it will still be possible to reach it by making another query in the search engine or entering the page on which it was published (Szymielewicz 2014).

However, CJEU noticed that internet users may have a vested interest in obtaining access to information, and that in view of the above, a balance should be sought between the interest and the basic rights of the data subject. In particular, this is about the individual’s right to respect of their private life and protection of their personal data. The Court clearly stated that the rights of the data subject are, as a rule, superior to the above interest of internet users.

In his book *Świątynia w cyberkulturze: technologie cyfrowe i prawo w społeczeństwie wiedzy* [Shrine in Cyberculture: Digital Technologies and the Law in the Knowledge Society], Zdzisław Brodecki wrote as follows:

At the beginning of the 21st century, we are observing in social life two overlapping disputes of the basic importance for the philosophy of law: the dispute between “atomists” and “holists”, and the dispute between “individualism” and “collectivism”. Usually, “atomists” support individualism and are liberals, while holists prefer collectivism and are communitarians. It is the thought of the West, which needs to be confronted with the philosophy of the East. Only in this way can we begin the construc-

tion of a thought bridge with a view to overcoming the crisis in international relations and creating a starting point for the binary code of the legal culture. This code is for legal security what the Aristotelian acorn is for the oak (Brodecki, Nawrot 2007: 91).

This spot-on analysis accurately reflects the situation of our civilisation. The ability to combine two opposite philosophical concepts requires sensitivity, methodical work, as well as a visionary approach. The internet has become a new area of social activity, which needs new reflection on the heretofore functioning of the society. Technological change forces us to reconstruct the basic social notions, since the social area of human life takes on a broader meaning, becoming more fluid. Conflicts often result from the fact that the law does not keep up with the changing reality. In its construction, the law has to take on the appropriate dynamics. It may not function only in a hermetic environment of professionals, because in this way it will become a semantic product understandable only to insiders. In the age of the new media, it is a challenge not only to become familiar with the law but also to use it, so that it becomes an integral part of the public space.

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## Summary

### *The Right to Be Forgotten – a Right in the Digital World*

The internet has become a tool for storing memories. Owing to its dynamics and nature, the uploaded information begins to live and evolve. Access to information and the

possibility to create or modify information has never been as easy as when the internet became widespread. The control of information is hindered, if not impossible. The autonomy of content, and its evolution in the network, which is not entirely left without control, may raise concerns. That is why the European legislator seeks to regulate the management of information on the internet. The unprecedented judgment of the Court of Justice gives individuals the right to be forgotten on the internet. In the era of new media, the judgment becomes a beacon determining the direction to be taken by the legislation.

#### Keywords

right to be forgotten, information, internet, search engine



## REVIEWS / REPORTS





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## American revolt against meritocracy.

A review of Christopher Hayes's *Twilight of the Elites: America after Meritocracy*, William Deresiewicz's *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life*, and Thomas Frank's *Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People*

It will be the reign of scientific intelligence, the most aristocratic, despotic, arrogant and contemptuous of all regimes. There will be a new class, a new hierarchy of real and pretended scientists and scholars, and the world will be divided into a minority ruling in the name of knowledge and an immense ignorant majority.

Mikhail Bakunin

On 9 November 2016, the liberal press of the Western world, as well as the liberal sector of the Internet – constituting a vivid reflection of opinions and emotions of the global class of affluent and well-educated middle class – began a debate on the blow to its ideology (unprecedented for several decades), as represented by Donald Trump's victory and Hillary Clinton's defeat in the US presidential elections. If we were to judge by the pre-election narration, a thing without any sense has happened – a female candidate who throughout her adult life was minutely constructing the CV of a future female president, the most competent and experienced person who has ever run for the highest office in the USA (Reuters 2016), lost to a man using the English language at the level of a third grader (Shafer 2015), a vulgar crypto-fascist without any esprit or taste, a xenophobic demagogue unable to open his mouth without insulting some group of voters (Frank 2016a). In the subsequent days that followed, as the emotions gradually cooled down, there emerged the first attempts at solving the mystery of the victory – a victory that was equally or even more surprising to social researchers than to the global “creative class”. Reasons behind it were sought among the international march of the essentialist nationalism, deeply rooted racism and misogyny of the American back country, and an unprecedented mobilization of the privileged, who did not want to or could not become aware of being privileged.

This review seeks to present a line of reasoning posing an alternative to the above-mentioned explanations behind the successes of populism in such countries as the United States or Great Britain. This train of thought attaches great importance to both the failures and unfortunate successes of the system of education, and in particular higher education system. The reviewed publications are Christopher Hayes's *Twilight of the Elites: America after Meritocracy*, William Deresiewicz's *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life*, and Thomas Frank's *Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People*. Their authors intended them as books about the situation in the United States, but in view of the existence of the global network of economic interdependencies and – increasingly – the global class structure, they are also relevant for Poland and Europe. If we were to agree with Frank's, Deresiewicz's and Hayes's analyses, the successes of the populists would have to be considered an attempt at defeating a corrupted, unjust and non-democratic social system into which the contemporary meritocracy has evolved rather than (or not only as) a racist or nativist revolt against the increasingly diversified society.

### The power of the most gifted ones

Just like the "civil society" (Starego 2016), meritocracy seems to be an idea with almost no enemies. As far as in relation to democracy people are willing to use the quotation from Churchill that "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time...", the meritocratic rules of the game have become a part of common sense to such an extent that the society automatically perceives education through their lenses (Melosik 2015). It is not associated – despite the meaning of the other part of the term – with a system through which some people rule others, but with a manner of the construction of social relations guided by elementary principles of justice. These principles provide that every human being's position and role should be determined solely by their actions, ambitions, and determination. And as much as for centre-right neoliberals it is the operation of the free market which is responsible for the "just construction of inequalities" (Stańczyk 2013), the centre-left sees the analogical chance in the functioning of the universal education system. We can say that as much as there is no capitalism without markets and no autocracy without an army, one cannot imagine meritocracy without a higher education system.

This huge importance which in meritocratic social systems is attributed to education, and in particular higher education – preferably one based on institutions which are ordered according to a strong and clear hierarchy – bonds universities and the best secondary and primary schools closely with authorities of this world. The social system emerging as a result of this alliance was described by Christopher Hayes in his book *Twilight of the Elites* in 2012. The functioning of elite schools of higher learning and their role in the formation of the "ethos" of new meritocratic elites was described by William Deresiewicz in *Excellent Sheep* in 2014.

Finally, published the day before the presidential elections, the book *Listen, Liberal* by Thomas Frank (known in Poland for one of his previous publications *Co z tym Kansas?: czyli powieść o tym, jak konserwatyści zdobyli serce Ameryki* [What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America]), focuses on the political institutions of the well-educated "liberal class". The author pays particular attention to the way in which it transformed the Democratic Party – previously closely related to the trade unions. From the pedagogical perspective, Deresiewicz's book seems to be the most interesting of the above publications – however, we need to become aware that along with the development of the meritocratic system, the boundaries separating educational institutions from society increasingly blur. Education and the notions, ways of thinking, hierarchies, values, and desires related to it exit schools and structure the life of individuals and the entire society. It is an "invasion" which is not entirely different from the one of academic economy carried out earlier. In order to understand its consequences and the manner in which, by way of feedback, it changes schools themselves, as well as their roles and social and political requirements in relation to them, one needs to look at the entire social system – from the economy to politics. The United States is a good starting point for such an analysis, since the country has been dictating global educational trends for almost one hundred years. Also on the road to meritocracy, the US went further and earlier than other societies.

### Half a century of animal-like training

The first consequence of depending the shape of future social hierarchy on school achievements is the universal demand of self-improvement, which starts at a very early age.

For members of the upper middle class – the most ambitious ones, but at the same time having no financial capital that would allow breaking the "resistance" of universities against the admission of less talented candidates – this is tantamount to designing the entire childhood to match the recruitment requirements of elite colleges.

As the sociologist Mitchell L. Stevens pointed out, "affluent families fashion an entire way of life organized around the production of measurable virtue in children". "Measurable" is understood here as possible to be included in the application for college admission (Deresiewicz 2014).

The recruitment system based on SAT tests (an equivalent of the Polish *matura* – secondary school exit examinations), and documentable out-of-school activities, sports achievements and – particularly significant for elite universities – "leadership skills", is to guarantee the candidates' "versatility". The wealth of the scope of activities that may increase one's chances of being admitted to the school of their dreams in combination with ruthless competition, results in the emergence of life paths in which nothing is a matter of chance and every action is subordinated to the possibility of achieving a higher place in the social hierarchy. This leads

to a specific variety of alienation, as a part of which the criteria of recruitment, formerly having a deep (although not always praiseworthy [see Karabel 2005]) social sense, are completely emptied from values stepping beyond their function of being a currency allowing one to buy their way into elite schools.

Kids do them [“rituals known only to propitiate gods”] because they know they are supposed to, not because they, or anybody else, actually believes in them. If students were told that they needed to stand on their heads to get into Harvard, they would do so as eagerly, as diligently, as skilfully, and as thoughtlessly as they do everything else. The process takes activities that used to be ends in themselves and reduces them to means. (Deresiewicz 2014)

The process of the unending fight for position exerts considerable pressure on universities. Their prestige (determined by national and international university rankings) is related to professors’ research achievements and selectiveness of the recruitment process. School wastrels negatively affect the position in the ranking. Therefore, when the schools finally admit “the best of the best”, they lose any motivation to perform any further screening. Expulsion of students does not lie in the interest of academics who are busy almost solely with their research, schools which are penalized for it in ranking, or – obviously – students themselves or their parents. As a result,

[...] professors and students have largely entered into, in the words of one observer, a “mutual nonaggression pact.” Students want to do as little as possible. Professors are rewarded for research, especially in elite schools, so they want to spend as little time in their classes as they can. (Deresiewicz 2014)

In consequence, institutions educating the meritocratic elite resigned from their behaviour-shaping and – largely – educational function. But although

Getting through the door is very difficult, [...] once you’re in, there’s almost nothing you can do to get yourself kicked out. Not the worst academic failure, not the most egregious act of plagiarism, not even threatening a fellow student with bodily harm [...] is sufficient to get you expelled. Once you’ve been admitted to the club, [...] you’ve got a God-given right to stay in the club. [...] Kids at prestigious schools, in other words, receive an endless string of second chances. (Deresiewicz 2014)

The unusual gentleness with which students of elite universities are treated does not extend to the students of inferior schools. Firstly, the latter have no chance to win high positions in ranking anyway (and the drastic screening – just like in Polish universities – may be related to advantages of a financial nature), and secondly, their students are in for a different fate than that of the awaiting graduates of selective colleges:

Students at places like Cleveland State [...] are being trained to occupy positions somewhere in the middle of the class system, in the depths of one bureaucracy or other.

They're being conditioned for lives with few second chances, no extensions, little support, narrow opportunity – lives of subordination, supervision, and control, lives of deadlines, not guidelines. (Deresiewicz 2014).

These differences – between elites, which are forgiven everything, and the middle class subjected to finicky supervision – do not cease to exist when both groups leave their universities. The inequalities legitimised by education structure the entire social life – devoid of talent, the middle class functions in the increasingly tight corset of regulations, while “the best” avoid responsibility even if their actions lead the economy to the brink of a collapse. This drastic imbalance does not trigger off a reaction of politicians originating from the elites, as it is considered an element of what is understood as “justice” as a part of meritocracy rather than as a societal problem.

### Pedagogy of the elite and pedagogy of the masses

Graduates of the best schools differ from the majority of those who are the elites of money or birth in that they not only acquired an institutional guarantee of their advantageous position, but also in the way they won it – taking part in merciless competition for a small number of places in selective colleges – which lets them believe that they owe all they have to their own work, skills and abilities. Acceptation of their own position requires from them a recognition that the existing state of things is fundamentally just. As Thomas Frank writes,

[...] they feel precious little sympathy for the less fortunate members of their cohort – for the adjuncts frozen out of the academic market for tenure, for colleagues who get fired, or even for the kids who don't get into “good” colleges. That life doesn't shower its blessings on people who can't make the grade isn't a shock or an injustice; it's the ways things ought to be. [...] Solidarity [...] stands in stark contradiction to the doctrine of individual excellence that every professional embodies (Frank 2016b).

A consent for inequalities originating both from homes devoted to fighting for a position and the system of education based on competition is extended to the entire social system. Paradoxically, it is the greatest weakness of the meritocratic system and a reason behind its gradual degeneration. It made it impossible for the political representation of the US meritocratic elites – being (in view of its support for the equal opportunities principle) the centre left Democratic Party, and not the centre right Republicans or the Republicans (serving the interests of financial rather than cultural aristocracy) – to fight with the inequalities growing since the 1980s. The exacerbation of inequalities (being – according to Frank – a direct consequence of a doctrine providing that the talented ones deserve everything, while the ones having no talents – very little) has two consequences. First, the stake in the fight for position is increasingly higher, as the gap between the (increasingly better rewarded) success and the (increasingly stronger punished) failure keeps

growing. What also grows in consequence is the motivation of the cultural aristocracy to invest into the future of their children – so that they do not experience the ruthless consequences of educational failure. Secondly, since cultural capital, in a more direct way than before, translates into financial status, the (strongly motivated) parents from the upper middle class have a double (cultural and financial) advantage above the rest of the society. If we add to this the advantage in the area of social capital they acquired while studying, it becomes obvious that there is no social group (with the exception of the richest ones – but there are very few of them), which could compete with the children of the meritocratic elite for places in prestigious schools.

This is paradoxical as – in compliance with the liberal credo – it is precisely education (rather than for example the redistribution of income) which is to be the solution to all social problems – including inequalities:

College can conquer unemployment as well as racism, they say; urban decay as well as inequality. Education will make us more tolerant, it will dissolve our doubts about globalization and climate change, it will give us the STEM skills we need as a society to compete. [...] there is no social or political problem that cannot be solved with more education and job training. Indeed, the only critique they will acknowledge of this beloved institution is that it, too, is not meritocratic enough. [...] (Frank 2016b)

The paradox of this situation lies in the fact that presenting (and political-ly promoting) education as a prescription for all problems, meritocrats simultaneously cut off access to the only institutions that can guarantee a dignified life in an unequal society to the rest of society. They cut it off, tightly filling them with their own children.

The numbers are undeniable. In 1985, 46 percent of students at the 250 most selective colleges came from the top quarter of the income distribution. By 2000, it was 55 percent. By 2006 (albeit in a somewhat smaller sample), it was 67 percent. Only 15 percent came from bottom half that year; a slightly older study put the share of the bottom quarter at all of 3 percent. (Deresiewicz 2014)

Christopher Hayes, the author of *Twilight of the Elites*, calls this process (with reference to the famous phrase used by Roberta Michels) “the iron law of meritocracy”:

The Iron Law of Meritocracy states that eventually the inequality produced by a meritocratic system will grow large enough to subvert the mechanisms of mobility. Unequal outcomes make equal opportunities impossible. [...] Those who are able to climb up the ladder will find ways to pull it up after them, or to selectively lower it down to allow their friends, allies, and kin to scramble up. In other words: “Whoever says meritocracy says oligarchy.” (Hayes 2012)



## Who oversees the guards?

For all the authors in question, the contradiction between meritocracy and democracy is as clear as that between democracy and oligarchy. These assumptions could be slightly alleviated, if the “rule of the most gifted ones” really was more economically effective and more supportive of social cohesion and tolerance than its (often no less hierarchic) alternatives. Is this really so? The answer, contained in each of the books in question, although varied as to the degree of radicalism, is consistent in one point – the period of the rule of the meritocratic elite (omitting the issue of an equalization of educational opportunities, the results of which are mainly felt in the case of gender inequality) should be assessed negatively.

The reasons behind this state of affairs are complex and their analysis exceeds the scope of this review. However, three issues demand attention. The first one is the consent to inequality presented in the preceding section. Meritocrats see education as a cure for this. Nevertheless, they are unable to share access to education with the other social classes. This makes permanent work on the “extension of educational opportunities” a political farce.

The second one is the issue of the fundamental lack of responsibility resulting both from the principle of rewarding the best, and the fact that the majority of professions practiced by the educated class have the structure of self-governing professions:

Although we are the subjects of all these diagnoses and prescriptions, the group to which professionals ultimately answer is not the public but their peers (and, of course, their clients). [...] The professions are autonomous; they are not required to heed voices from below their circle of expertise. (Frank 2016b).

The close liaisons between state authorities and experts (often graduates of the same universities) on the other hand, and the world of the judicature, legal bar, business, and financial institutions dominated by graduates of the Ivy League schools on the other, may extend the circle of individuals that the cultural aristocracy feels responsible to. This extension, however, applies solely to representatives of the same elite belonging to other circles and environments. Additionally, the hermetic nature of the authority environments (also existing in other countries with elite sectors of higher education) generates the third obstacle to good governance – the absence of intellectual flexibility, risk-taking or opposing orthodoxy. The sources of this state of things can be traced already to the ruthless system of selection every member of the elite must have gone through:

So extreme are the admission standards now, so ferocious the competition, that kids who manage to get into elite colleges have, by definition, never experienced anything but success. The prospect of not being successful terrifies them, disorients them, defeats them. [...] The cost of falling short, even temporarily, becomes not merely prac-

tical, but existential. [...]. The result is a violent aversion to risk. You have no margin for error, so you avoid the possibility that you will ever make an error. That is one of the reasons that elite education has become so inimical to learning. [...] nobody wants to take a chance on a class they might not ace, so nobody is willing to venture beyond the things they [...] do very well. (Deresiewicz 2014)

The political consequences of this change in the way elites think (being the main subject of Frank's book and a considerable part of the material described by Hayes) step beyond the hermetic nature, the related lack of public accountability and intellectual openness, and the unwillingness to take risk. However, these traits were responsible for the ultimate defeat of the government – being, according to Hayes, „the crowning achievement” of meritocracy – of Barak Obama in its fight against the problems left behind by his predecessors. The exacerbation of inequalities and thus the increased stakes of the activity of elites, the temptations awaiting them and the motivation to avoid a defeat combined with individualism – the perception of one's own position as solely one's own credit – lead to a slow decomposition of the social fabric. People who do not belong to elites become victims of “predatory bankers, predatory educators, even predatory health care providers” (Frank 2016b). Professional ethics is replaced by the seeking of maximum profits, and reputation loses any significance:

[...] it's rather difficult to design a competitive system that heavily rewards performance and doesn't also reward cheating. [...] it has the perverse consequence of turning reputation on its head. Those engaged in the most fraudulent activity, landing the largest deals and profits, creating the most dodgy and fictitious revenue, come to be the most highly regarded, while those who demur or, worse, blow the whistle, come to be viewed suspiciously, even regarded with contempt. (Hayes 2012)

At the same time – just like in the case of elite schools – none of the pathological behaviours of the elites is punished, which affects the social legitimization of the existing system of power.

These pathologies can be considered a symptom of social inequalities rather than meritocracy as such – however, it is the latter which allowed and continues to allow to legitimize them before the society. What is even more, the very core of the meritocratic system is increasingly based on fraud. The schools that are to select the most gifted individuals actually choose their students almost solely from among a narrow group of the wealthy upper middle class. Cooptation from outside the social elites, including the programme of positive discrimination, plays the role of a fig leaf for the money – and the capital-oiled social capital of reproduction. “The function of the (very few) poor people at Harvard is to reassure the (very many) rich people at Harvard that you can't just buy your way into Harvard.” (Deresiewicz 2014). Meritocracy promises the selection of “the best ones”, but is unable to fulfil the promise – and the related social costs incurred by the underprivileged presented with subsequent “no-alternative” reforms taking away their resources for life, by the middle class striving for social advancement, despite having no

money or connections necessary to send their children to top universities, and finally by the elites trained since their earliest years for participation in the rat race devouring all their childhood seem to considerably exceed the possible profits.

## Summary

In Poland, the education of elites at the academic level is not as fetishized as in the United States, since there are no institutions here that would offer it. However, this situation may change. The process of reforming the system of higher education and education as such is in progress, and one of its goals – regardless of the party membership of the subsequent ministers – is an increase in the selectiveness of the best schools, limiting the number of the issued MA diplomas and encouraging hierarchisation of the higher education system. These plans enjoy a wide-spread support of the academic circles longing for (the relatively recent) times when Polish university was an institution for the elites.

The books I have presented in this review originated in reaction to pathologies of the system which Poland has been trying to establish for the last few years. Americans are fetishizing their universities, or – to be more exact – the process of enrolment, to a historically unprecedented degree. We should not assume, however, that the existence of a meritocratic elite would have different consequences by the Vistula River than it has by the Potomac. Although the appearance of considerable economic pathologies requires the existence of a strongly liberal economic system, political and social pathologies take a similar form in all the countries educating their elites in selective schools. Both France and Great Britain may boast a ruling class which is as hermetic, as corrupt, and as isolated from the mainstream daily life as the United States. All the three countries are also marked by an exceptional power of the populist – or should we rather say democratic – reaction to the alienation of elites.

Hayes's, Deresiewicz's and Frank's books – with all their imperfections resulting from the journalistic and polemical approach to the problem – one lacking scientific rigour – offer an insight into what Poland might be like if we desire to train our own meritocratic elites. In contrast to what we can sometimes hear in the public sphere or academic discussions, there are many alternatives to the system they have described. Let us hope that we shall have enough common sense to choose one of them.

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