

New Identity in Children's Literature Reprinted in Textbooks after 1999

1. Around the concept of 'identity' – from the sociological and national perspective

This paper was inspired by P. Saukkonen's article *On the Concept of National Identity* (1996) presented at the 'Crossroads in Cultural Studies' conference in Tampere, Finland. Saukkonen analyses the concept of national identity among others against the background of political and economic transformations which have taken place in Finland since the 19th century.

In a country which suffered occupation (first Swedish, then Russian from 1809) for such a long time as Poland (that is until 1918), the 1990s' economic and educational reforms demonstrated that the concept of identity connected with 19th-century fight for independence and language, patriotic integration of this small nation, and above all intensive post-war work has changed completely and that it is possible to carry out such revolutionary transformations to turn a poor country into a state of well-being over a short period of time. Patriotic identity of the nation at the turn of the 20th century is presently perceived in a different way by the Finnish society. New Finnish identity consists to a large extent of identification with Europe – modern globalisation, active participation in the European Union, intensive and honest work, language education, new technologies and easy access to computers throughout the country. And above all acceptance of multiculturalism and tolerance towards others¹.

¹ M. Ihonen, *Promoting the teaching of literature: experiences from Finland*, in: *Metodyka a nauka o literaturze i nauka o języku*, ed. by D. Michułka, K. Bakula, Wrocław 2005, p. 37–45.

Similar theories are proposed by contemporary Danish authors and illustrators of children's books, e.g. Egon Mathiesen, author of the popular book *Frederic and His Car* (Copenhagen 1944) as well as Bergson Flemming and Borge Bjornbol, authors of *The Children on the Globe* (1950). Mathiesen emphasises the role of humanistic education, attitude of tolerance and understanding of 'otherness' – which serves as a basis for forming propositions regarding equality of different races and cultures as well as equality of all children.² In the opinion of Nina Christiansen, author of an article on tolerance in contemporary Danish children's literature, Mathiesen's ideas refer to frequently quoted words of a Social-Democrat Julius Bonholt, who later became the Danish Minister of Education and Culture: 'School must foster children's individual abilities and talents and focus on shaping independent citizens who are prepared to function within a system of 'responsible democracy.'³ In their books Mathiesen, Flemming and Bjornbol excellently implement trends to promote international trends in children's literature, encouraging children to become acquainted with other countries and cultures. Their ideas and comments concerning respect for multiculturalism enhance the school-created image of 'a new identity' based both on national and world history and teach openness towards the world.⁴

The concept of national identity is rich and comprehensive. In his excellent book *Tożsamości zbiorowe* (2005)⁵ Zbigniew Bokszański differentiates between ethnic identity and national identity, juxtaposes national identity and postmodernity, the dynamics of the

² E. Mathiesen, in *Bogvennen* 1986/86. Quote after N. Christiansen, 2000, *An Attempt to Create and International Identity. The Picture Book in a Literary, Didactic and Historical Perspectives. A Comparative Reading of Egon Mathiesen: "Frederik with the Car" and Flemming Bergsôe: "The Children on the Globe"* in: *Text, Culture and National Identity in Children's Literature*. International Seminar on Children's Literature: Pure and Applied, University College Worcester, England, June 14th–19th, 1999, ed. J. Webb, NORDINFO Helsinki, pp. 112, 114.

³ *Ib.* 115. Today in Denmark the term 'racism' has been replaced with the concept of 'ethnicity.'

⁴ *Ib.* 114.

⁵ Z. Bokszański, 2005, *Tożsamości zbiorowe*, Warsaw PWN.

Western civilisation and the identity of an individual. Bokszański explains the concept of collective identity among others with the use of A. Kłoskowska's definition: 'In line with its theoretical background, the concept of identity entails a reflective approach of the subject towards himself. National identity of a national community is composed of its collective self-knowledge, its self-determination, the created self-image and the whole content, essence of this self-knowledge, and not externally constructed idea of national characteristics' (Kłoskowska 1996: 99). It is also composed of different forms of collective autoperception and manifestations of beliefs, attitudes and hierarchy of values of all the members of a national community conditioned by social, political and economic circumstances (Bokszański 2005: 108). One of the key factors influencing the concept of identity is the continuity – otherness dichotomy (ib. 110–111). The continuity aspect (*the dimension of sameness*) consists in 'emphasising continuance of the past, endeavouring to remain within the boundaries of the community' and determining a repertory of meanings; in accentuating '<external> exploration of society and a tendency to expose its constitutive features.' On the other hand, the aspect of otherness (*the dimension of distinctiveness*) focuses on differentiating and making distinct by drawing comparisons with 'what lies outside' the community – 'it sees identity as a result of differentiating between 'us' and 'them'. The concept of identity is undoubtedly linked with the definition of a nation.

Another typology of collective identities presents four models: 1/ the objective model (it defines identity from the position of an external observer and takes into account political and economic 'hard facts' (Smith 1991: 14). Smith adds that the Western model emphasises the significance of the national territory, the legal system and institutions, citizens' equal rights and political culture while the Eastern model concentrates on ethnic origin, culture and folklore; 2/ the so-called researched model of identity accentuates the fact of 'cultural distinctiveness of a national community having roots in the distant past' (Malinowski 2001) – ideals, traditions and language, family, friendship, social relations, entertainment, institutions and schools, freedom, justice, honour and values. In her interpretation of this model Kłoskowska attributes particular importance to aspects of

symbolic culture (e.g. works of art, their aesthetics, content or ideology), which in developed nations constitute a representative repertoire: 'symbolic culture remains ... a sphere most significantly differentiating national cultures and determining their specific character' (Kłoskowska 1990: 15). The repertoire may be defined as a manifestation of the collective identity of a nation; it is considerably the most stable part of culture; it comes into being as a historical process, drawing from various social sources and reflecting the features of its particular culture' (Kłoskowska 1996: 59). Borrowing some terms from structuralists ('the paradigm axis' and 'the syntagm axis'), Kłoskowska also uses the notion of 'the national culture syntagm' as a specific 'utterance' (constructed on the basis of syntactic rules) combining elements of different systems: art, customs, religion, literature, historical reflection, politics (1990: 5). 3/ the model of national identity construed – often developed by intellectuals and politicians – sees identity evolving as a historical process. A characteristic feature of identity in this model is nationalism (Gellner 1991: 64); 4/ the public opinion model.⁶

An important source quoted by Bokszański is Zygmunt Bauman's article analysing the metaphor of a pilgrim, a tourist and a vagabond in the context of postmodern identity.⁷ The contemporary world of 'globetrotters' (e.g. young Poles – emigrants) is marked by metaphors. The pilgrim – an individual who journeys to one place –

⁶ See A. Smith, *National Identity*. London 1991.

⁷ Bauman, Z. (1993) *Ponowoczesne wzory osobowe*, 'Studia Socjologiczne' no. 2; 1995 – *Modernity and Ambivalence*, transl. R. Lis, PWN, Warsaw; 1995 A – *Freedom*, transl. J. Tokarska-Bakir, Znak, Cracow; 1995 B – *Body and Violence in the Face of Postmodernity*, The Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń; 1996 – *Postmodern Ethics*, transl. J. Bauman, J. Tokarska-Bakir, PWN, Warsaw; 1998 – *Identity – Then. Now. What for?* 'Polish Sociological Review', no. 3; 2000 A – *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, Warsaw; 2000 B – *Globalization*, transl. E. Klekot, PIW, Warsaw. Other significantly related issues are the concepts of globalisation, postmodernity and sociology of identity discussed in the works of Anthony Giddens. See Giddens, A. 1994, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Polity Press, Stanford; 2001 – *Modernity and Self-Identity*, transl. A. Szulżycka, PWN, Warsaw. See Bokszański, Z. *Tożsamości zbiorowe* (2005), Warsaw.

represents the past and his identity is determined by his profession and particular work. Over time the pilgrim evolves into a tourist – a person who voluntarily chooses to travel to different places – changing his place of abode, jobs, being mobile, creative and active. Apart from the tourist, the contemporary world of social consciousness also distinguishes the model of a vagabond who can never ‘settle down’, who has no choice in choosing his home, as he is forced to live where he can find a job, where the circumstances allow him to stay longer. Our acceptance of the model of a pilgrim, a tourist or a vagabond depends on us – on our education and various personality traits and disposition, e.g. our profession, openness to suggestions, flexibility in thinking, communicative skills, language education and cultural tolerance. These components at the same time constitute parameters of modern humanistic education, a token version of which is represented for children by literature reprinted in textbooks. These factors offer us freedom in following our life's path and free choice, though to a large extent we are still dependent on the political, economic and cultural situation of our country.⁸

In his article *Social Theory and Politics of Identity* Craig Calhoun refers to the criterion of political correctness in his considerations of the concept of identity (Calhoun 1998: 9),⁹ e.g. from the American perspective this criterion may be troublesome, but there are clear differences in meaning of the following terms: *negro*, *colored*, *black*, *Afro-American*, *African American*. Polish people still become emotional when e.g. talking about controversial homophobia (homo-

⁸ The concept of national identity also introduces theories of transformation of contemporary nations and ethnic groups inhabiting a given country (See comparative analysis of national cultures). Bokszański, Z. *Tożsamości zbiorowe* (2005), Warsaw, p. 101. Psychological aspects of identity and functioning of an individual within a group (society) and in culture are discussed by Robert Szwed in his book *Tożsamość a obcość kulturowa* (Lublin 2003).

⁹ One of sections in Calhoun's work is devoted to the issue of ‘recognition’ (*self-recognition* and *recognition by others*). The author sees it as the essence of considerations related to identity – here analysed from the perspective of political correctness.

sexuality) or 'standard' heterosexuality (Calhoun 1998: 21).¹⁰ This in other European countries (e.g. Finland and Sweden) is no longer an issue, as tolerance of otherness – also in the context of sexual identity – is taken for granted there.¹¹

In *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* Tim Edensor claims that contemporary symbols of culture influencing identity of a nation include also elements of popular culture: material culture of objects and goods, e.g. cars, cosmetics, clothes, alcoholic drinks – products associated with a particular nation, e.g. Nokia is associated with Finland, Volkswagen – Germany, Honda – Japan, Clinique and Gap – the USA, whisky – Scotland,¹² or media products – e.g. films and comics (with the notable example of Walt Disney's film adaptations of *belles lettres* for youngsters). In Edensor's opinion an important role in the development of national identity in Scotland was played e.g. by the film *Braveheart*.

¹⁰ Here Calhoun emphasises the significance of the influence of private and public life on identity, recalls the context of differentiating (me and others) and – referring to Charles Taylor's work – claims there is a need for 'soft relativism.' See also Taylor, C., 1989, *Sources of the Self*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press;

¹¹ See Taylor, C., 1992, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press; 1992b, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press. C. Calhoun, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹² Edensor, T. 2002, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Cracow. The author analyses identity among others in the context of nationalism, writing: 'The literature on nationalism and national identity has been dominated by a focus on the historical origins of the nation and its political lineaments ... (Cubitt 1998:1).' 'Identity is a process, not an essence, which is continually being remade in consistent ways, through an 'internal-external dialectic' involving a simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition and one's ascription by others (Jenkins, 1996: 20).' Identity is also associated with identification: 'A key element of the process of identification, especially in the case of national identity, ... is the drawing of boundaries between self and "other"' (recognition of these differences). 'National identity, like other identities, is about using "resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being" ... (Hall 1996b: 4).'

Important for research on sociological aspects of childhood and construction of children's identity is also Doris Bühler-Niederberger and Beatrice Hungerland's paper *Children's Social Value*. As research shows, it is not national identity that determines children's range and strength of values, but such factors as family, everyday needs (e.g. school, play), safety and friendship. Moreover, the authors observe that children are important consumers on the market; thus from the sociological perspective market needs should also be taken into consideration.¹³

Undoubtedly, these considerations can benefit from observations made by researchers of children's literature printed in the international publication entitled *Text, Culture and National Identity in Children's Literature*¹⁴, which lists among others the following aspects: the road to independence, history and national identity in Irish children's literature, the role of landscapes in English and Icelandic children's literature, 'a room of one's own' – the advantage and dilemma of Finno-Swedish children's literature, and – as it was mentioned – very interesting cultural aspects appearing in contemporary Danish children's literature – the development of international identity, transgressing cultural boundaries and the vision of children becoming members of democratic countries in the post-war Europe concerned with tolerance and understanding of multiculturalism.¹⁵

¹³ Doris Bühler-Niederberger and Beatrice Hungerland, 2002, *Children's Social Value in Childhood and Children's Culture*, ed. Flemming Mouritsen and Jens Qvortrup, University Press of Southern Denmark.

¹⁴ *Text, Culture and National Identity in Children's Literature*, 2000, International Seminar on Children's Literature: Pure and Applied, University College Worcester, England, June 14th–19th, 1999, ed. J. Webb, NORD-INFO Helsinki.

¹⁵ ... and children are the same all over the world: 'They can be black or white, yellow or brown.' See N. Christiansen, 2000, *An Attempt to Create and International Identity. The Picture Book in a Literary, Didactic and Historical Perspective. A Comparative Reading of Egon Mathiesen: 'Frederik with the Car' and Flemming Bergsøe: 'The Children on the Globe'* in *Text, Culture and National Identity in Children's Literature*. International Seminar on Children's Literature: Pure and Applied,

2. National identity of a Pole or the identity of a European?¹⁶

In the analysis of national identity of Poles it might be worth referring to some literary and educational phenomena from the past, for example Polish Romantic literature studied in Polish language education classes. Romanticism is often associated with 'patriotic identity' defined through codes and metaphors of landscapes relating to nature, (political and mental) geography and Polish history. National place and space is delineated by cultural geography, political geography (the country's territory, regions, mountains, lakes), national rural landscapes, our nation's past represented in textbooks through national heroes or sites of historic battles, the place of gentry and Sarmatism in the history of Polish culture, borderline territory issues, the country's nature, Polish Catholicism, historical symbols (cemeteries, graves, castle ruins) as well as particular places (e.g. Polish cities: Cracow, Warsaw) and the genteel household.¹⁷ All these cultural markers of national identity were visible in literature reprinted in the 19th-century textbooks (Michułka 2003).

Educational approach to children's literature has radically changed since and new Polish language textbooks for primary schools and lower secondary schools already contain a rich collection of

University College Worcester, England, June 14th–19th, 1999, ed. J. Webb, NORDINFO Helsinki, p. 111. The article's author analyses two books: Egon Mathiesen's *Frederik with the Car* and Flemming Bergsøe's *Children on the Globe* and observes that 'The message of *Children on the Globe* is that even though children live in different places, under very different conditions, they have some things in common: they have to learn to read and write; they have the same basic needs and the same fundamental feelings,' p. 112.

¹⁶ Z. Bokszański, *Stereotypy a kultura*, Warsaw 1997; *Stereotypes and Nations*, 1995, ed. T. Walas, Cracow; *Borderlands. What does it mean for Poland and Finland*, 2004, ed. D. Michułka, M. Leinonen, Tampere; Mitosek, Z. *Literatura i stereotypy*, Wrocław, 1974; E. Reigrotski and N. Anderson, *National Stereotypes and Foreign Contacts*, 'Public Opinion Quarterly' 1959, no. 23.

¹⁷ Yi-Fu Tuan, 1995, *Space and Place*, Warsaw.

literary and cultural texts referring not so much to national issues as to universal values.¹⁸ The main principle in Polish language education in the reformed educational system is the ability to read and interpret literary and cultural texts and to refer to the broad context of values and traditions present in both Polish and European culture. This European, axiological context undoubtedly affects the construction of the concept of new identity. This corroborates Kłoskowska's theses concerning symbolic culture and the repertory of cultural texts which become a criterion differentiating national cultures and determining the collective identity of a nation.

From the perspective of literary criticism and education the process involves among others 'introducing [pupils] to the world of culture especially through ... inspiring the motivation to read and developing the ability to appreciate literary works and other texts connected with culture, also audio-visual, and through that gaining a better understanding of the human being and the world; introducing them to traditions present in national and European culture.'¹⁹ With such a repertory, there is a visible freedom in the choice of set texts in different syllabi. It must be admitted that there is also a number of texts that form the repertory core, constituting 'a basic code determining the existence of collective memory and a sphere of shared cultural experience' (Inglot, Patrzalek 1996), and thus indispensable for participation in culture. These also include literary works for adults adapted for children in order to popularise cultural, educational and national values.²⁰ In comparison with Polish language education of the previous century and earlier, e.g. post-war

¹⁸ An excellent book edited by Anna Janus-Sitarz *Przygotowanie ucznia do odbioru różnych tekstów kultury* (Cracow 2004) presents the newest trends and tendencies in teaching about culture in schools. See also M. Latoch-Zielińska, 2005, *Wiedza o kulturze – nowy przedmiot kształcenia w szkole ponadgimnazjalnej*, in *Metodyka a nauka o literaturze i nauka o języku*, 2003, ed. D. Michulka and K. Bakula, Wrocław.

¹⁹ *Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej o reformie podstawy programowej, kształcenie blokowe*, 1999, 'Biblioteczka reformy,' Warsaw.

²⁰ Michulka D, Olszewska B. 2006, Polishness or Europeaness? Adaptations of the classics in Polish textbooks after 1999, in *"Interlitteraria"*, ed. J. Talvet, Tartu.

times, when the repertoires were dominated by works in the spirit of Polish literary tradition and domestic culture and the concept of national identity was inseparable from the definition of patriotism and homeland – one's country of origin, recent textbooks already present shared European or world heritage. Thus, apart from national values, they contain common truths and universal values. And so textbooks feature among others *the Bible*, Homer's *Iliad*, Miguel Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, *The Song of Roland*, *Tristan and Iseult*, *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare and many others.²¹

Textbooks are divided into sections according to the themes and issues with a variety of cultural references that they contain and have telling headings: *The World of Feelings*, *The World of Values*, *The World of Culture* sections in Maria Nagajowa's textbook *Słowa i świat* (*The Word and the World*),²² or *The Beginnings of the World*, *The Beginnings of the Word*, *Deeper into Thoughts and Feelings* sections in the textbook for grade 1 of the lower secondary school *Świat w słowach i obrazach* (*The World in Words and Pictures*) by Witold Bobiński (Bobiński 2002). The textbook for grade 4 *Dziwię się światu* (*The World Amazes Me*) features the following: history of Poland, texts about great Poles, landscapes and nature, references to educational issues, myths, fairy tales and legends, but also numerous excerpts from literary works representing different areas of culture: e.g. Oscar Wilde's story *The Happy Prince*, a motif taken from *The Chronicles of Narnia* by Clive Staples Lewis – *'This Poor Dragon*

²¹ Naturally, there are also national accents, e.g. excerpts from *Pan Tadeusz* by A. Mickiewicz or *The Teutonic Knights* by H. Sienkiewicz. Very patriotic in character is e.g. the lesson devoted to the Independence Day (11.11). The textbook features the lyrics of Jan Pietrzak's famous song *Żeby Polska była Polską* presented in a splendid red-and-white graphic outline against the background of reproductions of historical paintings with battle scenes, Polish flags and Solidarity demonstrations, and a few pages further there is an excerpt of *The Deluge* by Henryk Sienkiewicz accompanied by batalistic stills from Jerzy Hoffman's film, again in a red-and-white colour scheme. H. Dobrowolska, 2000, *Jutro pójdę w świat*, grade 6, Warsaw, pp. 101, 120–121.

²² M. Nagajowa, 1997, *Słowa i świat. Podręcznik do kształcenia literackiego i językowego dla klasy szóstej szkoły podstawowej*, Warsaw, WSiP.

Called Eustace, ' a 5-line Inuit song sung on setting off to hunt from the tale *Odarpi, Son of Egigwa* by Alina and Czesław Centkiewicz. The textbook selection manifests openness to European issues and interest in cultures from different parts of the world.

Alina Kowalczykova and Krzysztof Mrowcewicz's syllabus for grade 1 of the lower secondary school *Do Itaki (To Ithaca)* offers a great variety of literary and cultural texts. It contains sections with collections of texts which on the one hand accentuate respect for tradition and the past (*Tradition, That Is Living History*) and on the other make strong references to the issue of construction of the identity of a European in Bauman's understanding and his 'pilgrim' metaphor with particular emphasis on tolerance of 'otherness', e.g. *Me and Others, Dreams and the World or Our Europe, My Home*. Apart from a number of excerpts taken from great world classics, e.g. Homer's *Odyssey*, Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote and the Windmills*, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's *Barrow-Wight* from *The Long of the Rings*, the textbook is basically dominated by Polish literature,²³ yet dealing with both Polish and European identity issues. Polish texts refer to universal truths and themes and the headings of further sections pertain to the role of Poland and Poles in Europe, e.g.: *I Live in Poland, I Live in Europe* (Norman Davies's *Europe: A History*), *The European Myth* with Wanda Markowska's tale *Europe*, or the section called *The Heart of Europe* with J. Iwaszkiewicz's *A European in Rome* and *Europe*.

The lower secondary school textbook *Rozwinąć skrzydła (Spread Your Wings)*²⁴ abounds in cultural texts relating to the concept of identity. Particularly valuable here is an excerpt from *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* by Selma Lagerlöf with four important issues: the metaphorical significance of the juxtaposition of domesticated and wild geese, the young gander's feelings, Nils's observations and feelings, symbolic meaning of the Animals' Congress and the crane

²³ The collection is rich and diverse, ranging from Jan Kochanowski's poems through Mickiewicz to Białoszewski, Szymborska, Iwaszkiewicz and Tischner.

²⁴ T. Michałkiewicz, *Rozwinąć skrzydła. Język polski. Kształcenie kulturowe. Gimnazjum kl. I* (part 1), Warsaw 2000: 84–87.

dance. The third task accompanying the text requires interpretation of the whole book: ‘What does the little protagonist learn, how does he change during the journey, what choices does he have to make, what rules govern the birds’ world, what human longings, fears and other feelings do the geese experience (and elf-sized Nils together with them, gradually)’ (ib. 87). The textbook also draws attention to the patriotic significance of Selma Lagerlöf’s story – the boy’s air trip allows the author to portray Sweden as a country, its geography, nature and culture.

3. New identity – on communicating

New papers on the concept of identity focus on the ability to communicate and the act of communication, which is essentially indispensable in the united Europe of present times – an age of travelling, journeying and constant discovery of new countries (cultures). And therefore young school recipients of different cultural texts learn how to freely express themselves, how to discuss issues, how to use arguments, how to apply practical (pragmatic), even instrumental, linguistic devices in a conversation. Thus a number of texts reprinted in textbooks also refer to the concept of communication between people, and textbook tasks develop conversation and negotiation skills (Wlazło 2005: 56, 58–59).²⁵ The following

²⁵ Marcin Wlazło first assumes a philosophical perspective (among other Martin Buber’s interpersonal relationships and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s discovery of the truth through dialogue), then he looks from the point of view of literary criticism (among others Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic relations), and then moves on to adopt an educational stand (relying on questions (heuristics) e.g. in the Socratean approach). He emphasises the significance of the other person (THOU) in dialogue (M. Buber, *I and Thou*, selected and translated by J. Doktór, Warsaw 1992). School education may especially rely on emotions stemming from the particular understanding between the interlocutors (‘genuine dialogue,’ ‘attentive silence’) and the discovery of the truth (G. Gadamer). School education may use a form of heuristic dialogue (a heuristic talk, which is in a sense an adaptation of the Socratean method) and different kinds of questions that can be asked in

quotation from Myrdzik's paper excellently reflects this school reality of communication, dialogue and the art of conversation: 'The Polish language as a school subject, consisting of education in the Polish language (including linguistics, literature and culture), media, readership and information,²⁶ makes use of dialogue in its various forms. Polish language teachers' task is to foster the pupils' ability to communicate ... The teachers' incentive to stimulate conversation, encouragement for the pupils to ask questions, competence in developing in pupils an approach of constructive criticism to phenomena occurring in culture of old and of present days constitute the basic components of the dialogue model in Polish language classes' (Myrdzik 1999).²⁷

Let us illustrate it with a few examples. In the textbook for grade 5 *To Lubię (I Like It)* (workbook) Halina Mrazek and Iwona Steczko set a pantomime task 'Let's Talk Without Words', discuss 'the magic power of politeness' and precise communicative meaning of utterances.²⁸ Hanna Dobrowolska in the textbook *Jutro pójdę w świat (Tomorrow I'll Venture Out into the World)* uses Mark Twain's *Broken Heart* to introduce communicative tasks (Dobrowolska 2000: 25–32), while 'dialogues about politeness' are presented to fourth-graders on the basis of an excerpt from Clive Staples Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (from *The Chronicles of Narnia*

class (motivating, explanatory, defining the subject and the scope of discussion, helping with inductive or deductive reasoning, checking understanding and inviting comments).

²⁶ See *Podstawa programowa języka polskiego*, 'Polonistyka' 1995, no. 5, p. 22.

²⁷ Quote after M. Wlazło, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

²⁸ E.g. the question: 'Excuse me, have you got the time?' does not always mean 'What time is it?', as it can be answered with 'Sure I have, plenty,' or 'Mary, how can I solve this problem?' 'The sooner the better, bro.' H. Mrazek and I. Steczko *To Lubię* (workbook), grade 5, Cracow 2002, pp. 56–57. The textbook authors classify utterances according in the following way: asking, announcing, stating, expressing surprise (e.g. I request, I order, I suggest, I invite, I ask; or – I tell you, I comfort you, I guarantee you, I threaten you, I beg you, I promise you, I assure you, I warn you). Another section is devoted to advising and counselling.

series), bearing the textbook title of *The First Encounter*. The main protagonists of this famous tale – little Lucy and faun Mr. Tumnus – exchange polite words. When the protagonists see each other for the first time, the faun's verbal reaction at the sight of a human being is as follows: 'Excuse me – I don't want to be inquisitive – but should I be right in thinking that you are a Daughter of Eve'? (Łuczak, Murdzek 2001: 12), after which he introduces himself. Little Lucy continues the conversation in an equally polished manner, replying: 'Pleased to meet you, Mr. Tumnus' (ib.). An ironic and amusing approach to 'politeness' is presented in Wiera Badalska's poem *Excuse me, Mr Dragon*, where a knight is courteously and elegantly trying to convince a dragon to behave properly: not to roar, spit fire, throttle sheep by saying: 'Excuse my boldness – said he – but the matter is important ... I wish to talk to you, Sir, about serious matters ... As a rule I shun brawls, but unfortunately you, Sir, behave in a despicable manner ... Should I jab you with a sword? Or a spear? What would you rather? But first I must warn you, it hurts terribly' (ib. 15–17).

Pupils' critical approach to cultural texts presented in class is essential. Here there is a wide range of options – learners may disagree with the author, they may quote appropriate arguments in a discussion with other classmates, defend their points of view, consider the interlocutors' arguments – converse, in a nutshell. This can be illustrated with Sharon Creech's *Absolutely Normal Chaos* written in the form of a journal, where the protagonist offers an account of a love affair and makes comments about her friends' behaviour. The third task accompanying the text runs as follows: 'Read some journal excerpts in which Mary writes about Christy. Decide whether the words are impartial and justified (objective), or whether they are biased (subjective) and the writer was influenced by her own feelings and emotions' (Dobrowolska 2000: 62–63).²⁹

²⁹ Pupils analyse the meaning of objectivism and subjectivism (e.g. the differences between an objective account of the school reporter and a subjective, emotional commentary of a participant).

4. Multiculturalism and tolerance of otherness

With reference to Richard Shusterman's deep philosophic insight into multiculturalism as one of the key terms describing the world in the age of globalisation, it is necessary to consider the related complex issues from the fields of politics, ethics, religion and aesthetics. In a Polish language class discussion of all the 'pros and cons' of globalisation and cultural integration, understanding of the issue of multiculturalism and the ensuing tolerance of otherness may help pupils in solving the dilemmas connected with multiculturalism and answer the questions: Does globalisation really constitute a threat to the existence of national identity? How to talk about multiculturalism in a country as homogeneous (uniform and unvarying) as ours? How to treat Bauman's claim that 'tolerance petrifies hypocrisy,' and Levy-Strauss, who asks: 'How to reconcile the diversity of cultures with a belief in their inequality'?³⁰

Research on multiculturalism is thus connected with cultural identity, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism and numerous questions that could also be asked in classrooms, e.g. 'Is it really possible to understand other cultures? Are there any uniform cultures or are they all hybrids to some extent? Are all cultures equal? If so, how can conflicts between them be settled? (over e.g. Mohammed's caricatures or headscarves of Muslim schoolgirls) If not, then who decides which culture is superior and which is inferior and how? Is the identity of a cultural group more important than the identity of an individual? Should autonomy of cultures be preserved, or should mixing be encouraged? Do literature and art constitute bridges

³⁰ See Z. Bauman, *Kultura jako spółdzielnia spożywców in Perspektywy refleksji kulturoznawczej*, 'Studia Kulturoznawcze I', Poznań 1995; P. Boski, M. Jarymowicz, H. Malewska-Eyre (ed.) *Tożsamość a odmienność kulturowa*, Warsaw 1992; M. Carrithers, *Why Humans Have Cultures*, Warsaw 1996; M. Jarymowicz, *Studia nad postrzeganiem relacji 'ja-inni'. Tożsamość, indywidualizacja, przynależność*, Wrocław 1988; A. Kapciak, L. Karporowicz, Z. Tyszek (ed.), *Komunikacja międzykulturowa: zderzenia i spotkania. Antologia tekstów*, Warsaw 1990; T. Pilch (ed.), *O potrzebie dialogu kultur i ludzi*, Warsaw 2000.

linking cultures or are they a manifestation of their diversity and incommensurability? Did publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* really help abolish slavery? Does the repertory of Western literary works constitute a tool of political domination over ethnic minorities?³¹ There are many questions of this kind.

In this respect of great assistance may be a book entitled *Edukacja wielokulturowa. Poradnik dla nauczyciela (Multicultural Education: A Handbook for Teachers)* edited by Anna Klimowicz.³² It tackles such issues as self-knowledge as a way of understanding others, search of national, regional and European identity, tolerance as a tool of influencing the contemporary world, multiculturalism versus the legal system.³³ Let us illustrate it with textbook examples.

Textbooks from the series *To lubię* abound in cultural texts. They construct identity not only of a Pole or a European, but of a human being.

At a higher level of school education – in grade 5 – the textbook authors include an interesting section entitled *It Was Like This ... Was It Like This?* in which they present issues related to basic concepts connected with man's identity in the universe. The section contains a selection of explanatory, illuminative texts presenting among others mythological and Biblical creation of the world and man, contemporary knowledge about the universe, trying to throw some light on cultural differences, e.g. Jan Parandowski's *Chaos, Gaia and the Gods*, Anna Kamińska's *'In the Beginning God Created Heaven and Earth,'* Jadwiga Stańczakowa's *I Can Feel Cosmic Laws, How Snowstorms Form* by Alina and Czesław Centkiewicz, Michał Jędrychowski's *Moon – Our Satellite, Big Bang* – a press article, *The Cosmic Egg* – a drawing of a serpent-entwined egg

³¹ To use ideas of W. Malecki, who is a translator and interpreter of R. Shusterman's works and the author of the multiculturalism syllabus at the postgraduate studies programme at the Institute of Polish Philology in Wrocław (typescript), and D. Lesiak's analysis (typescript).

³² *Edukacja wielokulturowa. Poradnik dla nauczyciela*, ed. A. Klimowicz, Wydawnictwo CODN, Warsaw 2004.

³³ Another book worth reading is J. Ambrosiewicz-Jacobs's *Me. Us. Them. Ethnic Prejudices Among Youth and Alternative Methods of Education. The Case of Poland*, the Jagiellonian University, Cracow 2003.

symbolising time ('world egg') (accompanied by a definition from Władysław Kopaliński's *Dictionary of Symbols*) (Kłakówna, Jędrychowska 2000: 106), a funny picture story by Jean Effel *The Creation of the World* (Kłakówna, Jędrychowska 2000: 115) or Michaelangelo's painting *The Creation of the Sun and Moon*.

An interesting piece presented in the textbook is Maria Krüger's tale *Why Bushmen's Skin Is Dark* illustrating the important issue of acquainting children with elements of another culture. To match young readers' perceptive skills the textbook version has a child protagonist. The passage presents the lifestyle and behaviour of a little girl 'Mbi, who lives in the heart of the African land ... amidst impenetrable jungle, infinite steppes and vast deserts of Africa' (ib. 96). Introduction to the tale retains the style of a mythical fantasy tale: 'In those very distant times, when the sky was not as yet lit up by the stars and the moonless nights were dark and gloomy...' (ib.). Naturally, a tale for young readers must also contain references to ethical and moral issues, with a clearly delineated protagonist type right from the start. The girl is presented against the background of the African bush: 'Mbi was as slender as a young palm tree bending in the wind, her skin was a light shade of golden brown and her hair copious and shiny. But, more importantly, she was good' (ib.).

Interesting and discussion inspiring is also Karl May's tale about a brave Indian *Winnetou* presented in H. Dobrowolska's textbook for grade 5. Apart from preparing an in-depth characteristics of the protagonist based on direct descriptions from the novel, Winnetou's words and other characters' opinions of him (admiration, disdain), pupils try to form their own judgements about the protagonist with the use evaluative language. With the help of popular films, comics, gadgets (e.g. toys, Lego blocks) and country music, they also bring Indian issues to life in a class discussion: 'Why is the legend of the Wild West still alive?' (ib. 85). Such discussions expand pupils' knowledge of other cultural areas, in this case – Indian customs.

Another notable example is that of a beautiful Indian tale about the creation of the world (*Indian Tale*) – an excerpt from Sat-Okh's novel *White Mustang* (ib. 117–123). In Indian culture presented in it the role of the creator of the world is played by the Great Spirit Gichy Manitou, who sits 'on a huge rock sprung up in the middle of

a green prairie like a lonely cloud in the clear sky' and smokes 'his pipe pondering.' The Great Spirit bakes people in an oven and thus 'creates' beings differing in skin colour: a white man (who has not stayed in the fire long enough and so is pale and weak), a black man (who has 'baked' too long and so gets burnt) and a brown man ('beautiful, statuesque in shape ... he had in himself might of the forest and the strength of an oak. His muscles glistened in the sunshine and the wind swept his black hair') and it is the latter, the brown one, that he chooses to be his 'successor,' saying: '[Now] you are the host, be a just ruler and love nature. Do not raise your hand against your brother, or the people I expelled behind the Big Water will return and take your land. Then the prairie and the forest will die, and so will you. Go, build a tipi and live there, and a ray of the first full moon will bring to your tent a woman who will be your wife' (ib.).

This quotation from the Indian tale may serve as a good way of summing up our considerations concerning new identity. Despite recent considerable political and economic transformations in Poland and great debates over the role of Romanticism and history in the contemporary world, old moral and ethical truths remain valid at various levels of education. Already in early humanistic education postmodern Europe promotes bringing up young people in the spirit of moral integrity, honesty, communicativeness, reliability and conscientiousness. In the context of wider research on literary and cultural education in schools it can be observed that the approach of multiculturalism and tolerance of otherness prevails.

This survey of excerpts reprinted in textbooks functioning as 'cultural readings' leads to an interesting conclusion: the concept of identity in the Polish language education is constructed on the basis of universal truths and values – both European and global. And although school repertoires are dominated by Polish authors, they not only contain references to national traditions such as Romantic rebelliousness, nobility and religiosity of Poles, but also introduce a wide scope of different cultural areas, construct an image of modern Polish society, present our country situated in the heart of Europe from a variety of angles and in an interesting way while 'cultural guidelines' in new textbooks prove that the underlying principle is

that of comprehensive education of a nation which may play an important role in an age of globalisation and European integration.

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