CREATIVITY STUDIES

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COMMUNICATE TO ENGAGE: STORYTELLING, CONTENT CREATION, AND PROMOTING THE IDEA OF SUSTAINABILITY AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN TRAVEL VIDEOBLOGS

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Abstract. In the area of digital media narratives, an important communication role is played by influencers who, thanks to original media messages, become creative gatekeepers of specific ideas. Travel videoblogs are often underestimated as pure entertainment, whereas they can be seen as important tools for public discourse creators. The research uses methods of compositional and content analysis, supplemented with narratology and netnography. In the space of popular travel videoblogs, the main ideas promoted include the ideas of sustainable development and intercultural dialogue. Bloggers create and stimulate the existence of online communities, express specific ideas, concepts and worldviews that partly come from the area of scientific discourse, particularly anthropological, cultural and ethical ones. The research highlights the serious public role played by the digital nomads as influencers and new kind of friendly authority and presents case study of successful communication strategies, narrative skills and technical competences of authors. The online travel narratives can be seen as marketing of ideas and thus used as practical tool of communication for institutions, non-governmental organizations and other actors of communication. The paper analyses new material (new genres of communication, new channels, new strategies) and topic of high importance in the context of intercultural conflicts and ecological problems. One of the most influential Polish travel vlogs, *Globstory* by Kaja Kraska (initiated in August, 2014), serves here as a case study. It was chosen because its content is typical for this genre and because of creative and engaging practices of the vlogger who successfully influences the public and its understanding of specific ideas and problems.

1. Introduction: digital narratives of media

Network communication, although psychologists perceive it as a mere substitute for inter-personal communication, undoubtedly possesses a community-forming power. In an anthropological sense, technology-mediated communication is today an important element of everyday communication behaviour, supporting both the stage of enculturation and socialization as well as complementing offline contacts and expanding the potential of individuals and societies. The blogosphere plays a special role here, especially the most popular part of it nowadays, which uses audiovisual messages – the vlogosphere. It is through the *YouTube* platform – as well as *Instagram* (*instastories*), *TikTok*, *Facebook* and other tools enabling creation and publication of audiovisual messages – that certain judgments, opinions, trends and fashions, desirable cultural (lifestyle), communication and economic patterns typical of

today's global information society are distributed and popularized. This is an area of very dynamically developing counselling and edutainment, spreading of pop culture, knowledge and pseudo-knowledge, as well as buzz marketing (gossip becomes an influential tool for controlling consumption in this context but also plays a crucial role during conflicts and wars). The phenomenon of gossip in various contexts were already addressed by folklore scholars and anthropologists (*e.g.* Czubala, 2005; Dunbar, 2004) and psychologists (*e.g.* Doliński, 2010), today trendsetters, communication designers and specialists dealing with marketing storytelling do so owing to the development of digital tools (*e.g.* Tkaczyk, 2023). A critical communication role is played by influencers, or content creators, especially micro-influencers who maintain close relations with their communities of interest (Morteo, 2017; Michaelsen et al., 2022). Owing to their media messages, they become gatekeepers of specific ideas and (informed or not) promoters of certain patterns of culture.

Influencers turn out to be new authorities in many areas who foster dynamic changes and shifts in the axiology of contemporary societies in the face of depreciation of traditional authorities and their maladjustment to the new needs of individuals (Miczka, 2002; Kiepas & Żydek-Bednarczuk, 2006; Zacher, 2003). Pop-culture authorities often have the value of novelty and adequacy, but they are quickly adopted and then used up and updated (replaced by other ones chosen from an infinite spectrum of possibilities). Therefore, any interpersonal relationships that allow for building a relatively coherent vision of the world and man in the world turn out to be valuable, giving the media user a certain sense of order (values, cultural norms) and connections, without overwhelming them with their narrative. Undoubtedly, such a role is played by messages produced by travelers-influencers, and the vloggers themselves and the communities subscribing to their channels or supporting them in various ways become recognizable, or even "significant others" (but not "strangers") in the space of digital media (Maj, 2020).

Anthropologists and psychologists agree that although wiki communities offer a multitude of relationships that the offline world did not provide (and therefore the relational and communicative potential of an individual is incomparably greater in cyberspace), their power is not very strong (Rothenbuhler & Coman, 2005; Greenfield, 2008; Dunbar, 2021). Such relationships are easy to establish and maintain (they do not require as much effort as complicated offline relationships), yet they are also easy to break (social sanctions are much lower). Some researchers treat this kinds of connections as "real virtual relations" (Jemielniak, 2020) or as different-than-real "parasocial relations" (Chung & Cho, 2017).

However, such a view of the matter seems to ignore the interpenetration of online and offline relationships, because the the web is just as real in a social and cultural sense as the offline world. The virtual has become the real since most of humanity is involved in online communication via social networks. At the same time, this world is burdened with a considerable dose of artificiality and appearances in the communicative sense – Goffman's (2020) facade has acquired a form of a digital identity that can be efficiently and effectively modified (Jemielniak, 2013b; Tifentale & Manovich, 2015). However, it seems that online communities do have some means of verifying the credibility of interactors. This is why ethical rules, communicating and obeying them in front of the camera become so important for influencers. This is undoubtedly an element of a culture in which media credibility means more than truth (Postman, 2002; Tkaczyk, 2023; Michaelsen et al., 2022).

This article results from the observation of the phenomenon that travel videoblogs are often underestimated as pure entertainment, whereas they can be seen as important tools for public discourse creators. In the space of popular travel videoblogs, the main ideas promoted include the ideas of sustainable development and intercultural dialogue. Bloggers create and stimulate the existence of online communities, express specific ideas, concepts and worldviews that partly come from the area of scientific discourse, particularly anthropological, cultural and ethical ones. The online travel narratives can be seen as marketing of ideas and thus used as practical tool of creative and ethical communication for institutions, non-governmental organizations, and other actors of communication.

Travel videoblogs should be regarded here as a specific communication genre where influence marketing is mixed with typical travel narratives performed to share interests and build the authority of the traveller. Thus, this storytelling type can be understood as cultural creation typical for the digital media epoch or communication performed within the frames of influencer marketing strategies. Influencer marketing typology is connected obviously with the platform of the communication process and its functionalities, which define the type of narrative possibilities. The other elements differentiating the vloggers are their range of influence (nano-, micro-, macro-, and mega-influencers or celebrities) or various influencer roles: opinion leaders, experts, consumers, social media luminaries, celebrities, trendsetters, bloggers and potential influencers (Morteo, 2017). Finally, there are many vlog types regarding their topics such as lifestyle, food, beauty, business, education, therapy, culture and art – travel is just one of the many possibilities.

The situation of travel allows for multi-thematic narratives, the high variability of styles of travel (such as leisure and touristic, extreme and adventure, discovery/scientific, artistic and cultural, business, exotic, anthropological and local travels, family travel, travel with animals), as well as the destinations (such as a specific region, country or continent, mountains, seas, cities, national parks). Travel videoblogs can also differ regarding the narrator type or the means of transportation. Travel vlogs can be seen as an element of the long history of travel narratives and dominant media changes (Maj, 2010, pp. 127–148). However, they may be seen as a new type of communication of virtual communities or communities of interest (Jemielniak, 2013a, 2013b, 2020). Videobloggers also use various genres as inspirations: travelogue, reportage, holiday video, personal diary, travel guide, adventure, dialogue or monologue, photostory, landscape video, and anthropological notes.

The videoblog analyzed in the article, *Globstory* by Kraska, is a representative *YouTube* travel videoblog belonging to the lifestyle type. It combines reportage and cultural travel with anthropological and landscape video elements. It is performed mainly as a monologue but often accompanied by elements of interviews and documentary observation. The narrator is an adult female, travelling lonely or in a couple, without kids or dogs, by various means of transportation. It is a global vlog presenting the world as "a global village".

It differs from other prominent travel vlogs created by television celebrities and well-recognized travelers (*i.e.*, Martyna Wojciechowska's (adventure) or Wojciech Cejrowski's (semi-anthropological). Kraska belongs to online travelling influencers but presents different author strategies and more conscious media language than the majority of them (such as chaotic and amateur-like *BezPlanu* or *Vlog Casha*, or also chaotic but in a more anthropological mode

Planeta Abstrakcja or *Busem Przez Świat*). The celebrity type of narrator creates professional and television-oriented content. In contrast, online travel influencers are often online-based non-professional filmmakers, in the course of time evolving towards a professional media producers (without showing it directly to keep the feeling of truthfulness and trust). The trend of professionalization of content creators can be seen as the impact of the cooperation of vloggers with influencer marketing agencies (Michaelsen et al., 2022). *Globstory* is an on-line-based amateur production which developed into an entirely professional one, but which still preserves the character of an author's original creation. It is an expert vlog with much cultural knowledge and a specific sense of humour.

2. Smartphone and ethics: ideas shared by digital nomads

Popularization of ideas, not only on the WWW, often takes place via messages that do not directly communicate such a goal. It is worth reflecting on the area of audiovisual messages, which seem pleasant to receive, allow for reflection, and also give a sense of connection with their authors and the community organized around them. In a friendly social environment, the recipient assumes an attitude of openness.

The topic of travel and tourism is undoubtedly an area that *per se* encourages dialogue and openness. In the area of popular travel videoblogs, the main ideas promoted include sustainable development and cultural dialogue. Indirectly, bloggers also popularize (and at the same time implement) the idea of information society and the process of socio-cultural convergence. They also promote individual freedom in relation to social connections and obligations (*e.g.*, they often prioritize travel over stable work and family) – and thus they embody the idea of geographical and social mobility.

Bloggers create and stimulate online communities focused around their *YouTube* channels or *Patronite.pl* crowdfunding website accounts, which are often combined with their *Instagram*, *TikTok*, or *Facebook* accounts. By creating video materials (diversified for each platform and audience and to some extent complementary to each other), bloggers become ambassadors of specific ideas, concepts and worldviews that partly stem from the area of scientific discourse, particularly anthropological, cultural and ethical. It is worth considering communication of digital nomads by taking into account, *inter alia*, their motivations for traveling, chosen destinations, communicated ideas and ways of understanding the concept of "ethical travel" and communication functions fulfilled by a given media message (Maj, 2018). One should also look at communication strategies (including the potential of interactivity), ways of building digital narratives (narrative skills and technical competences of their creators) and social relations. In the context of the WWW, interpersonal and technical competences often translate into communication success and stronger influence exerted at the level of ideas. Better communication means broader sharing of ideas and, thus, a more successful sale of specific products, concepts, and ways of thinking.

The research is based on triangulation of methods used in cultural studies area: compositional and content analysis of audiovisual messages (Rose, 2010; Bergstroem, 2009), narratology (Propp, 2011; Bal, 2009; Tkaczyk, 2023) and netnography or digital ethnography (Pink, 2009; Pink et al., 2015; Kozinets, 2019; Jemielniak, 2013a, 2013b, 2020). Such a combination

of several methods allows for simultaneous examination of the digital message itself from different perspectives, as well as for determining which of its elements have a community- and worldview-forming value (by means of studying a network community). Owing to this combination, it will be possible to examine the complexity of the communication situation in which a travel vlog assumes a role of the message.

In this analysis, I focus on the blog *Globstory* (2014–2022) by Kraska, which provides many examples of informed creation of media message and, at the same time, it is, in a way, a typical representative of the travel vlog genre. There are, of course, a lot of such blogs. Their creators have different assumptions, approach to work, technical and narrative skills. Their vlogs differ in terms of composition, approach to travel and forms of communication (*i.e.*, filming, blogging, and formation of community relations), yet all of them are part of the culture of participation (Delwiche & Jacobs Henderson, 2012) and at the same time provide recipients with content about the world and possible ways of exploring it, or function as an armchair travel narrative (Maj, 2010). However, my goal is not to compare these vlogs, al- though it is worth noting that such an analysis would be interesting due to the fact that the authors have different approaches to telling their stories, apply different formal means and use or create various styles. Perhaps it will become the subject of a separate study.

The area of Polish blogosphere was selected for clarity of communication and cultural patterns, while at the same time it is necessary to emphasize the universality of most of the observations (or at least their representative nature as for the Western way of perceiving the world). The choices made at the outset, however, have an impact on certain limitations of inference: some observations and strategies are undoubtedly characteristic of communication actors coming from the area of Polish culture. Therefore, full understanding of them requires a deeper knowledge of history and culture, as well as the axiology and mythology inherent in this particular culture. Although certain analogies can be found within the area of European culture, they will only be simplifying analogies, always modifying the meaning of a given phenomenon in the local context. Thus, there is both a universal and local value of messages of this type (the problem of what is "lost in translation"). In this analysis, I intentionally deal with universal content. It should also be emphasized that the circulation of digital content is global, so the above restrictions can be and usually are ignored by potential recipients. The only serious limitation for the circulation of the message is its language, although this drawback also disappears due to the bilingualism of creators and their videos, as well as to tools that are constantly improved owing to artificial intelligence which facilitate transcription of the message on the main platform on which vlogs operate today – *YouTube*.

3. Travel videoblogs storytelling: showing the world, translating strangeness and creating commitment

In the process of travelling problems of intercultural communication, culture clash or dialogue between cultures appear constantly (Podemski, 2004). It is a matter of the traveler encoun- tering the problem of possibility or impossibility of communication – whether one travels among "their natives" or among "strangers". The subject of the civilization clash is a frequent theme in cultural blogs created by people living in a foreign cultural circle, *e.g.* in distant

Asia (including *Pierogi z Kimchi* – a blog created by a Polish woman living in South Korea) and arouses considerable interest among Internet users. Therefore, it does not have to be associated only with travel, but also with a life of a temporary or permanent emigrant. Often, narratives of this type are combined, for instance, Kraska's vlogging career commenced with the channel *Halo, Turkey* which was created when she was living in Turkey for several years with her partner – a Turk. Her next step was a trip to Spain on her own and the beginning of a channel more focused on tourism: *Globstory*.

Thus, Kraska has gone from stationary (home) broadcasting cultural studies (but also informal, intercultural gossip) content from the area of another culture to creating mobile messages more complex in terms of narrative, information and content, combining travel and cultural knowledge. The film language of her vlog has developed significantly over the years, especially since the *Globstory* team was joined by Mateusz Mękarski, Kraska's new partner, who is responsible for numerous formal experiments in the field of filming and editing. The vlogger has also made several successful reportage attempts being film portraits of people met during her travels and documentaries of her personal encounters with other cultures (*e.g. GENOWEWA*, *The GAME*).

Very often it is the surrounding nature rather than human beings that is the crucial protagonist of travel videos. Nature becomes an equal protagonist in various blogs, hence the ecological commitment of vloggers. The commitment is not always directly expressed, but it can be read from the video image itself. The *Globstory* channel is a good example of this, as shots showing nature assembled to the rhythm of music are a frequent procedure here. This thread became even more evident when the blogger acquired a drone. While the video clip scenes from, for example, Cambodia are mainly filmed by hand or by means of a camera on a tripod or a smartphone set on the ground or on the street, video clips based entirely on pictures from the drone dominate in her later travels, *e.g.* around Kyrgyzstan. This tool, of course, adds drama, gives a different perspective, shows more landscape and thus allows us to see a man as a part of nature. The approach corresponds to Kraska's statements, in *Q&A* she tells her fans that she prefers traveling alone and resting away from people. At the same time, when interviewed by Wojciechowska, she addressed the responsibility of travelers and shows a high awareness of her influence on the environment.

The approach is also evidenced by some videos on Kraska's (2021) channel, *e.g. What's wrong with handing out gifts in Africa* (*and other poor regions*)?, made in August, 2021. The video includes numerous accounts of other traveling vloggers regarding the negative impact of mass tourists on local communities, especially children, caused by "tourist charity" (giving school supplies and sweets to children in Africa or India). This custom creates a reflex of begging, often pushes children away from education in favour of accepting gifts from unknown strangers, and then leads to the emergence of local mafias and criminal organizations that exploit children (Kraska, 2021).

It is hard to blame tourists for wanting to help. Several decades ago anthropologists noted similar tourist behaviour in a different cultural context (Podhale, Poland). Kroh (2000, p. 227), an anthropologist who spent his childhood among highlanders near the Tatra Mountains, names this custom simply: "visiting" the highlanders. Kowalski (2004, p. 183) ironically comments on this account: "a highlander, like any other element of the landscape, fauna,

flora, museum curiosities, *etc.*, can thus be viewed as any other museum object". Such museification or reification takes place today in intercultural communication, most often in the area of "visiting the distant Other", that is, in the context of exotic mass tourism. Vloggers do not address this process in a way the anthropologists do, but still they are aware of the unethical nature of this phenomenon, although they carefully (taking into account various attitudes of their so-called followers) emphasize that tourists' actions often result from good intentions. Kraska devotes an entire video and various fragments of commentaries in other entries to this topic. She claims that helping is noble but difficult, and that there is no single recipe for helping poor countries:

> "It all depends, first of all, on the place we are going to, the situation there, the politics there and what the real needs are. And I think we should not cultivate remorse when we visit such a place. If we don't know how to help, let's not have a panic attack that we have to come up with something immediately, because it will most likely be a misguided help caused by some kind of emotional outburst. The very coming to a given place and buying, for example, fruit in a local greengrocer, going to a craftsman and ordering a product there, such as a dress made of African fabric bought at a local market, hiring drivers or guides in a given place do already support a given country, its economy and give people there the opportunity to earn money. [...] We can bring help locally, for example to our friends and acquaintances in Poland [...]" (Kraska, 2021).

The vlogger offers direct help to more familiar people or institutions such as schools – but only after consulting the act with its principal who knows local needs. Therefore, it is not only about the dialogue between cultures, but also about not treating the visited countries as colonies or former colonies where people are devoid of the right to decide. The goal of the blogger and many travelers (who appear in this video) is to treat the people she visits in a subjective way, without the approach that Turner and Ash (1975) described years ago when writing *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and Pleasure Periphery*, a book about mass tourism as a neocolonial invasion of the poor South by the wealthy North. Vlogs, however, have a certain advantage over scientific literature – apart from describing the situation in the field, they also provide instructions on how to act, how to get involved, how to solve a problem (or at least not to deepen it). *Globstory*, however, goes further, perhaps owing to the blogger's journalistic education. There is also an analysis of the problem, an attempt to present its origins and to show it from various perspectives (this is one of the reasons why other vloggers appear in the video, and the problem itself is introduced through field observation accompanied by a Zanzibar, Tanzania, guide's commentary on the expectations of the local community that is used to receiving gifts from tourists). It is interesting for a cultural scientist to accurately recognize the genesis of the problem in the media coverage of the 1980s and 1990s and the participation of show business in creating the image of poor Africa:

> "How did it happen that Africa, the second largest continent in the world with 54 countries, has become a place that, even before we go there, is associated with poverty, hopelessness, crop failure, hunger, so that we gladly take there our suitcases filled with clothes, notebooks and pens? That we have slightly different feelings towards it than towards, for example, South America or Europe (and both of them do have problems too)? Why must Africa be saved? [*We are the World / We are the children*] In 1985, the most famous charity song was written. We all know it. But apart from the fact that the royalty income goes to 'aid to Africa', we know nothing. We do not know which

African country this aid is directed to, what specific problem it concerns, what are the causes of this problem and what are the realities in the given area, how many people does it reach? It's much easier to recognize great musicians who sang this song, or to pay attention to Bob Dylan, who looks as if he doesn't know what's going on. In the 1980s and 1990s most charity organizations were raising funds with the usage of a similar rhetoric, and not much has changed since then. The charity actions themselves and the money obtained from them can actually be used for good causes [...] but communication, the way of promoting huge fundraising actions most often present images of great poverty, children with bulging bellies and white people reaching out to them. Celebrities who become emotional in the presence of cameras are often the spokespersons. For example, *Comic Relief*, a British charity, sends a famous person to Africa each year and thus attracts media attention. Although it may seem that these assumptions are not wrong, the end justifies the means, all of this ultimately leads to the consolidation of the image of a celebrity as a philanthropist, Africa as a homogeneous entity, as a place of hopelessness, and Africans as helpless victims, so it deprives them of their agency, subjectivity and dignity. And a voice – which does not belong to those concerned, but to a white man from the West. According to such a message, while the mass media are not interested in giving other news from this continent, it becomes clear that Africa cannot do without us" (Kraska, 2021).

The author summarizes her argument by quoting a somewhat playful criticism of Bob Geldof, the author of the song in question, and concludes this argument with the information that *Comic Relief* withdrew from the criticized way of promoting charity campaigns. So she talks about the media and a certain change in the public discourse on a given topic.

However, it is also worth noting the way of presenting the content, completely different from a typical episode of a travel vlog, which, although it may contain entertainment elements (music and landscape interludes in the form of a video clip from the world), is basically simple in visual terms. Language of the message is different in the videos Kraska creates in order to present certain arguments and problems as well as journalistic topics. The first part includes a report from the field, a kind of documentary scene showing the problem (Zanzibar). This is followed by other vloggers' statements and stories (confirming the importance of the problem). Only then does Kraska appear with her monologue presenting arguments and the controversy of the topic raised among travelers and tourists (perhaps the approach to the subject is what distinguishes them).

The next fragment – with the aforementioned commentary – is entirely a video collage composed of media, network, television and press content. This part includes solely quotes, starting with a video clip with a song whose words become a response to the questions asked by the blogger, and ending with a press image accompanied by a quotation from the article. In the visual layer, the commentary is accompanied by numerous images of African poverty and of celebrities with their media representations. It is worth noting that this message also has a specific intra-frame editing in the collage style (often used in comics or advertising). The visual language is here adapted to the recipient who is accustomed to such style of online messages. It is also significant that such a way of presenting the content allows for simultaneous creation of a text (argumentation in the commentary) and a paratext (text in the image), which both are also accompanied by a visual (non-verbal) layer. This multifaceted nature serves to strengthen the message and at the same time visual elements appear together with the commentary constituting a kind of "evidence", having the attesting power. Thus,

the blogger's ideas are confirmed – firstly in the votes of other vloggers important for the network community, and then in "media evidence". This way of presenting content is in line with a wider trend in which the manipulations of mass media (created by digital immigrants or previous generations) are deconstructed by the network community of digital natives.

Kraska sums up her argument by stating that it is difficult to go beyond the well-established cognitive schemas when one is brought up by means of such media messages. What we have in mind when we go to the other end of the world are the mass media: their discourse and images. Kraska is also undoubtedly an example of a blogger who has reflected carefully on the topic of helping the poor from a foreign cultural circle, as once she herself assumed, perhaps not being fully aware of this, the role of the helper. The history of her Cambodian expedition in 2017 and the house of Mr. Pov is a good testimony to this (Kraska, 2017). It is thanks to the vlogger that her community, gathered on *Patronite.pl*, collected money for a new house for a poor man in Cambodia. As a result, the vlogger was obliged to fulfil the obligations towards both the recipient and donors, which turned out to create many complications and resulted in a series of repeated trips to Cambodia and – so far – two more videos (Kraska, 2018a, 2022). It turned out that participation in the developed information society as digital nomads linked by social networks with other representatives of economically developed societies makes it easier to raise money (the crowdfunding was quick and brought more funds than expected). However, fulfilment of the idealistic assumptions of the virtual community, safe transport of the money and transferring it to the appropriate purpose without harm to the recipients, as well as meeting the goal of the collection – building a house (which took several years) – turned out to be problematic (Kraska, 2017, 2018a, 2022). It is worth paying attention to the link between the image of the recipient (the video's protagonist) and the image of the blogger (representing the donor community). The failure of the recipient and the failure to meet the expectations of the community could result in the blogger losing her community, *i.e.* the audience and at the same time the *Patronite.pl* founders of all her journeys. Netnographic research confirms the high degree of coherence of actions required from a blogger who is treated as a close acquaintance whom the community trust. In the comments on Kraska's videos there are many raptures and congratulations, wishes for further success, expressions of support, and simply – interaction. Not only does the blogger skillfully create her videos, using the knowledge and competences of a digital media creator, but she also remains in regular contact with the audience, answers questions under the users' comments and creates special *Q&A* videos.

The blogger is undoubtedly very convincing and credible for her community. It is also worth adding that the video *GENOWEWA* also provoked supportive reactions from the audience, but this time the blogger declined, explaining in a separate video how difficult it is to help and that the protagonists do not always expect support (Kraska, 2020b). The aim of *GENOWEWA* was not to arouse pity, but to tell one's own story to become the subject of someone's interest, not the object of an aid campaign. In the case of a blogger, building commitment therefore consists in a mixture of emotions, natural willingness to interact, skillful management of one's own popularity and image, as well as the issue of social responsibility and creating a certain truth concerning one's core values. The blogger's activities also suggest that the actions of modern digital nomads can be reasonably considered as a proof that the

idea of a strong information society is being put into practice, because weak virtual relations turn out to be so strongly related to emotions and actions of individuals that they turn into strong bonds changing someone's life in a real way and realizing the ideal of a global village. Of course, there is one sensitive issue here and it is the business element combined with building social relations. Are the blogger's activities only business and calculation, or are they a spontaneous result of a desire to provide ethical help? Can the desire to reverse the colonial order be realized with the help of tools that actually strengthen this order (inequalities)? Can they be small steps towards a change for the better, as Kraska claims? Does economically entrenched influencing have to be always dishonest? Or maybe the willingness to participate in a dialogue between cultures and sincere feelings of friendship are possible in a global village?

Awareness of influencing the recipients, a sense of commitment to act in favour of others are also combined with a sense of ecological responsibility. This can be seen in the *Globstory* material created during the pandemic and using photos found on the Internet (a kind of digital found footage (film technique)). Because of forced stoppage, travelers – already in tandem – created a story about abusing people at work, *e.g.* in agriculture or in industry in various parts of the world, about forced labor, depriving people of property and land, and finally about environmental degradation of places located far from developed world economies, where production has been moved or where waste is exported in accordance with the principles of economic colonialism (Kraska, 2020a). Therefore, there is a conceptualized problem of sustainable development and in the background – technological development, socio-cultural convergence and the economy of the information society, as well as a proposal to live in the spirit of at least less waste, if not of zero waste. The images seen by the satellites are supplemented here with rich ready-made visual material (film, iconic and textual) and the most important element – the author's comment which proposes to rethink everyday consumer decisions at an individual level.

4. Conclusions: paradoxes of digital travels

In the last video from the trip to Kyrgyzstan (*Eagles*, *Falcons*, *Heroes*) (Kraska, 2018b) vlogger reveals her fatigue resulting from travel and filming (she depicts repeated returning to the camera when the shot is finished), which caused a wave of questions from the recipients and fans concerning her mental and physical condition and potential depression related to constant mobility and its limitations (such as the lack of stabilization and the impossibility to start a family). This shows that the relations between vloggers and their communities do not have to be based on purely economic exchange, but also lead to establishing interpersonal relationships and include real empathy.

Paradoxically, this not very funny video is shot in a country which the blogger considers her favourite destination (previously it was Iceland). The author talks about unspoiled nature, about the lack of commercialism typical of tourist places, about safety and good relations with indigenous people, she also mentions a small number of travelers (but not tourists) she met on the way.

This is significant, especially since the beginning of the video is a kind of game with the viewers and their habits: it begins with a wildlife scene and a story about the discovery of

the last Kyrgyz people living in yurts somewhere on the edge of the steppe. After a while, however, the hoax is revealed, and the lost village turns out to be a tourist attraction – an unusual campsite at the end of the world. However, the village is empty, there are no tourists, either mass or individual. Then the traveler introduces herself, presents the empty backstage made for tourists (who are missing) and nature (which is there). There is only one man on a horse throughout the entire video (it is therefore a literal and symbolic image of Kyrgyzstan) who turns out to be the only person met during many hours of hiking in the mountains, gorges and desert landscape.

Such stories arouse the recipients' imagination and at the same time present an image of the choices made by the blogger – they create a narrative, the atmosphere of stories about the journey and intrigue the audience as well. Perhaps this is the story that summarizes the set of ideals of the contemporary man "from the rich North" who tells stories about the "poor South". Perhaps it is the longing of the civilized man who on a daily basis is distanced from the natural world, animals, wild plants and the landscape.

Not abandoning their electronic equipment (which, after all, was created in the process of non-ecological and often unethical production) (Kraska, 2020b), digital nomads create narratives for other people connected to the web (also sometimes assuming the role of travelers) about the charms of a world devoid of tourists and civilization. The question remains, to what extent this is creation, and to what extent the true ideas of the bloggers' generation, a kind of contemporary digital nostalgia for a world that we do not know and which perhaps could scare us in reality, but as the image of a holiday adventure it seems tempting. Fortunately, most of the blogger's recipients will not check it, they will choose "news from the global village" instead of traveling "to the end of the world". Digital armchair travels build a certain circle of fantasies and shared stories, similar to the one built in the past around the storyteller and the fire in oral communities. After all, Marshall McLuhan's vision of a global village works better in the digital version than in the television one (McLuhan & Powers, 1992).

The question remains whether we can talk about a real dialogue between cultures, ecology and sustainable development as ideas that drive the contemporary man and their travels, "changing the world step by step", as the blogger puts it. Or maybe the most important thing is that the smartphone in her hands becomes a liberator that allows her recipients to look beyond the horizon? Civilization would then be both a nuisance and a salvation.

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