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## **The contemporary teenager – in front of themselves and in the society**

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The topic about adolescence may seem banal. It has been broadly examined and characterized in a wide social and pedagogical practice. The age specifics, the stage and quality changes, the necessities and pretences, problems and tendencies have been characterized. There is a huge heritage: Jean Piaget, St.Hall, P. Delaroché, Sigmund Freud ... Later came the great contribution of Igor Kon, of some other Russian and Bulgarian researchers too – H.Silgidzhiyan, Pl.Kalchev...

Has the adolescence been examined, is it well-known? The precise answer lies certainly in the real-life and its own dynamics. The teenagers are among all of us – at home, at school, in the street, at the stadium, in the game halls and recreations ... familiar but different at the same time... “The particular personality” (L.Dessev) stands out and it is childish but not identical with the other children. It is emotional and lively, but also stabilized in the society. It is among the parents and the classmates but at the same time it is alienated from them as seeking for intimacy and reciprocity and examining itself, too.

The direct study of the adolescence searches for, stresses on and makes sense of the specific “Self” with its full meaning and leading role in the life of “the grown-up child, becoming a youngster” (P. Delaroché). They are not the obedient and diligent boy or girl at home, they are not the disciplined student in the classroom – they express and lay claims definitely to be self-dependent. “A new “Self”” appears with the choices and decisions made, “one that is written with four capital letters” according to Igor Kon’s definition. I choose and decide on my own – I have my position, with my criteria and my preferences...

The power of the “Self”, mainly emotional and forceful, builds up a kind of new self-confidence too. Physiological steadiness and physical stability help it. The knowledge and the experience, the high energy, the realized self-control are enriched here. Jean Piaget defines “the ebullient vigour as a new engine in the activities and behaviour” of the teenager. That “differentiated credo” (Piaget) is highly committed. It is supported by the enriched experience, by the various impressions gathered, as well as by the social integration of the grown-up child in more and various fields. Another powerful engine comes – the love feelings. In principle they are still tender, difficult to be rationalized and almost impossible to be controlled. “The new life field” (Piaget) is well-known only externally – through conversation, films, literature. As a private one it becomes a considerable power with a difficult ( and often impossible) self-control. The mixed and unknown ex-

periences rule the “Self” of the teenager too. Their condition is familiar only through some external impressions and conversations. Now everything has a different quality.

A kind of specific union between the “Self” and my experiences forms teenager’s self-confidence connected with the activities and behaviour. A new citizen comes out among the parents and citizens, in societies with various members – one that is young and lively, sometimes with a caustic self-confidence, especially among “the old and the growing old”. They are the young and new citizens with forthcoming and long future, with their own role in making choices and decisions...

The shown-off “SELF” with “four capital letters” is both power and weakness; it is a symptom of selfishness and immaturity or of something else. Igor Kon is right in his general conclusion that the connection between teenager and society is a problem of the historic sociology, of the methodology of the social sciences and the interdisciplinary sexology (Child and society, 1988). It is seen from the fact of the “everlasting gap” among the generations and the frequent arguments about standard and requirements. And they, according to scientific assessments, and according to the impressions of many years too, are regularities and standard. A. Aries defines the adolescence as a period for “changing in order to show the new clothes”. And that is, the author continues, the natural self-assessment process that often leads to haughtiness and a kind of insolence in the behaviour.

Sigmund Freud proved and imposed his conclusion about “the real essence of every human age”. It has generally valid dimensions as well as something “that is only valid for a particular age period”. It is built in teenagers “firmly and significantly” with the experiences of the “Self”. In the young age it is signalled by a heightened self-assessment and often by an anxiety too: lack of satisfaction, suffering and disappointment. This characteristic is amazing with the teenagers’ friendships, for example. Not every coeval, classmate even with the similar behaviour is thought of a friend. Real and important it becomes more definite – often subconsciously. Ellen White (Intellect, Character, Personality – 2000) names this fact “my individualities that often remain misunderstood by me alone”. It seems that the “Self” searches for another but similar or liked one. I seek somebody who generally thinks as I do, who has orientations, assessments and criteria that I have. If I do not meet them I get disappointed, dissatisfied and lose interest in communication. But “the real one” cannot be met easily and the accumulating desire and necessity for an intimacy of the same age often remain far away from me. Frequently the teenager finds “a real friend” in their personal diary. A research of the phenomenon among 118 students has proved the fact: (18% out of the girls and 12% out of the boys have different diaries – (graduate student’s research). Here the teenager is the very themselves – they ask themselves and look for the answer alone. They reflect on whether they

are satisfied with themselves. Even the Self often argues with the Self and looks for a precise orientation, assessment, decisions. My "Self" understands my problems and disappointment, "follows" my dreams, desires and ambitions. "We get on well" is the generalised assessment given by the examined students. The researcher, however, goes in the depths that they comprehend taking in consideration other ways. Why they leave friends, why they do not accept rules and standards, why they do not "fall in love with" the school and its functions, why they are dissatisfied with their next of kin – parents, brothers, sisters.

The roots of the aspect of "those deprived of intimacy" has been outlined in Pl. Kalchev's studies about the anxiety in the teenagers (Sofia, 2005). The teenagers are often cross with everybody – "even with the God" for "those deprived of blessing". To some extent this type of teenagers is placed in a special kind of category. They usually "don't bear the craziness of their age" (Kalchev). Healthy and normal, they are often suppressed and more reasonable but still dissatisfied with something. It seems that such "suppressed youthful Self" confronts the regularities and the outlines of the age. Laughter, good humour and optimism are rare. However, everything remains within the standard and brings the typology to the individuality. It also finds a place in the age but it carries its own dimensions and problems.

However, anxiety can lead to another outcome for that fragile personality at this age. The narcotics, the alcohol and the unrestrained sexual life are another way, which is not a rare exception. Taking part in antisocial ideas and actions is also possible. Happening not for the first time and not by chance that lies deeply in the roots of a broken "Self". The social studies (Texts invitations for sociology, Sofia, 2005) reveal and give meaning to social defects, parents' irresponsibility, "attractive" youthful companies, individual instability in the root of the broken "Self". A destroying part is formed in such "favourable" soil (St.Hall) for progress and success. In this part a "self-identical" person matures and stabilizes in a way that is harmful and disturbing for everyone. Researchers, who reveal "the spoilt Self" as a sense and anxiety, write about them and give significance to them. St.Hall, R. Burns, Batson, Haffmann, Aizenberg, Levinass and others study and analyse this type of "destroying of the Self personality" which proves the obvious regularity that the youthful age is a typical beginning of the "Self in front of themselves and in the society". The formed entity bears all the regularities and the whole truth for a leaping progress that leads to a significant change. That's why the teenager is "a universal, initial root for the reliable significant citizen" (G.Piryov, 1988). Not "the obedient and cautious child" is the index of the youthful maturity. This maturity goes through the natural stages of the essential and striking transformation that sets up the teenager in the society and put them in front of themselves as well.