

***Snowflake Society – tendency towards uniqueness  
as portrayed in British media with the main focus  
on advertisement***

***Społeczeństwo „płatków śniegu” – tendencja w kierunku  
unikalności przedstawiana w mediach brytyjskich  
na przykładzie reklamy***

Katarzyna Sokołowska  
UNIwersytet Rzeszowski

**Keywords**

snowflake, generation, society, uniqueness

**Słowa kluczowe**

‘płatki śniegu’, generacja, społeczeństwo, wyjątkowość

**Abstract**

Society is defined as a group of people living together in an organised way in a more or less ordered community where rules are obeyed, norms set and respected and decisions followed. For many generations there was an overall tendency to stay within set boundaries, such as the cultural boundaries of norms and behaviour acceptable in a given nation and mostly influenced by various historical changes; political boundaries considering views and dictating manners of speech to reflect those views; and religious boundaries defining what people should believe. Recognising and respecting these limits was a way of life. Nowadays, however, many people embrace their right to individuality and uniqueness, and entire nations fight for their right to independence. Moreover, welcoming diversity in every way of life has become a motto for present-day society. How much of this can be attributed to a present-day stereotype that is greatly fuelled by the mass media, the stereotype of so-called ‘snowflake society’?

### **Abstrakt**

Społeczeństwo definiuje się jako grupę ludzi żyjących razem w zorganizowany sposób w mniej lub bardziej uporządkowanej społeczności, w której przestrzegane są reguły, ustanawiane i przestrzegane normy oraz przestrzegane są decyzje. Przez wiele pokoleń istniała ogólna tendencja do pozostawania w ustalonych granicach, takich jak kulturowe granice norm i zachowania akceptowanego w danym kraju; granice polityczne uwzględniające poglądy; oraz granice religijne określające, w co ludzie powinni wierzyć. Przestrzeganie tych ograniczeń było sposobem na życie. Jednak obecnie coraz częściej ludzie uznają swoje prawo do indywidualności i wyjątkowości, co więcej całe narody walczą o swoje prawo do niezależności. Bycie otwartym na różnorodność w każdym aspekcie życia stało się mottem współczesnego społeczeństwa. Jak wiele z tego można przypisać dzisiejszemu stereotypowi, który jest podsycany przez środki masowego przekazu, stereotypowi tak zwanego „społeczeństwa płatków śniegu”?

### **Snowflake Society – tendency towards uniqueness portrayed in British media with the main focus on advertisement**

The paper investigates the phenomenon of ‘snowflake society’ in relation to contemporary mass media, in particular the images they create, which are later reflected and reinforced in advertisements.

The aim is to show that these images influence the way the Millennials perceive themselves, often in opposition to the picture of an oversensitive and easily hurt individual who struggles to express himself/herself in today’s world. The analysis is carried out from several distinct standpoints – social, psychological, historical, from both: synchronic and diachronic perspective. In the part that discusses a reflection of the snowflake society in particular advertisements I exercise a close reading of the advertisements in question as the principal method. As a result, a more complex picture of the Millennials emerges: insofar as they are influenced by media-created images of their generation, they also criticise and contest them, since the stereotypes to the same degree shape as they limit the right to defining one’s own identity. It especially holds true to a group of people whose coming of age occurred in a world marked by growing complexity combined with the sense of relativity of all truths and personal anxiety, i.e. the world with a so called postmodern condition.

The structure of a society reflects the way in which it is organised by bringing together all the components such as social groups, institutions, statutes and roles. Meanwhile, culture refers to the way of life that is characteristic of that society and includes components like beliefs, values, norms and symbols. According to Bell “culture has two dimensions: the styles of the expressive arts, and the modes of meaning, historically the religious.” (Bell 2001: XVIII)

The structural components of a society are more stable than the cultural elements. Beliefs refer to definitions and explanations of what is commonly assumed to be true; however, with constant progress in the field of science, it is possible for the entire belief system to change its scope. Based on observation, one can say that values are yet another component that is flexible, as focus can be easily shifted to accommodate new moods within a society, as they are, after all, social agreements on what is right and wrong, good and bad, desirable and undesirable. Norms serve as guidelines not just for our behaviour but also for our expectations regarding the behaviours of others. The boundaries of acceptable behaviour can also be widened to accommodate progress.

Finally, the last component is a symbol, a representation of something else, and with a constant desire for simplicity in the modern world the supply of symbols is constantly growing.

The American sociologist C. Wright Mills is credited with coining the term sociological imagination, which refers to the ability to see the connection between one's personal life and the social world. According to Mills, "the individual can understand his own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, [...] he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances" (Mills 2000: 5). Acknowledging others and being acknowledged by others therefore creates a network of opinions and views. Of course, these views can be influenced by various elements; in the words of Mannheim "Even newspaper stories are slanted and pointed in such a way that the 'forming' of the raw material is unmistakable." (Mannheim 1993: 152) In *The Problem of Generation* Mannheim also states:

Were it not for the existence of social interactions between human beings—were there no definable social structure, no history based on a particular sort of continuity, the generation would not exist as a social phenomenon: there would be merely birth, ageing and death. (Mannheim 1952: 291)

As far as sociology is concerned one can distinguish three major perspectives: the functionalist perspective, the conflict perspective, and the interactionist perspective (also known as the symbolic interactionist perspective). Each of them offers an array of explanations regarding human behaviour in a social environment. Whereas the functionalist perspective (see: Emile Durkheim) perceives society as comprised of different parts working together in harmony, the conflict perspective (see: Karl Marx) regards society as composed of different groups and interests competing for power. Mooney et al., in *Understanding Social Problems*, state "Both the functionalist and the conflict perspectives are concerned with how broad aspects of society, such as institutions and large social groups, influence the social world." (Mooney 2013: 10) However, symbolic interactionism (see: Charles Cooley) is concerned with the social dynamics of individuals interacting in small groups. Further:

Symbolic interactionism also suggests that our identity or sense of self is shaped by social interaction. We develop our self-concept by observing how others interact with us and label us. (Mooney et al. 2013: 12)

Cooley also claims in *Human Nature and Social Order*, that social imaginations are identical with social facts (Cooley 2009: ix). Therefore,

by observing how others perceive us, we see a reflection of ourselves which Cooley terms *the looking glass self*.

Collective consciousness is a fundamental sociological concept that refers to shared knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes, which are common to a social group or a society. The collective consciousness, a concept developed by Emile Durkheim, gives people a sense of belonging and identity, bounding individuals together into collective units.

The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own [...] it is diffused over society as a whole, [...] it does not change with every generation but, on the contrary, links successive generations to one another. (Durkheim 2014: 63)

Moreover, Durkheim argued that “social change, if rapid, was disruptive to society and that the needs of society should take precedence over the desires of individuals; that is social change should be slow and methodical regardless of popular opinion” (Mooney 2013: 20). Nevertheless, according to Kenneth Smith no matter how rapid the social change may be, it is always modified with the views and values of the people who make up the society (Smith 2014: 34).

Howe & Strauss argue that:

To talk about a generation is to talk not about its bits and pieces, but about its social and cultural centre of gravity. For any new generation, like for any young and thriving and mortal organism, its direction of change can be more important than its current location. It is a generation's direction that best reveals its collective self-image and sense of destiny. (Howe & Strauss 2000: 17)

Different generations uphold different values and ideas that are somewhat unique to their times. Millennials perceive themselves as a group with a remarkable amount of optimism and idealism as well as a fair amount of pragmatism and realism (Burstein 2013: Introduction). However, the characteristics that the group displays, from the outside observer's point of view may be somewhat different. This group is seen as being oversensitive, less resilient and prone to taking offence in a heartbeat. This new trend of being ‘too easily offended’, according to Claire Fox, is the shortest yet most precise definition of the Millennial generation (Fox 2017: Prologue).

Throughout history, the term ‘snowflake’ has been used to describe different groups of people, starting with the very first known claim, which described someone who was opposed to the abolition of slavery: “In Missouri in the early 1860s, a ‘snowflake’ was a person who was opposed to

the abolition of slavery – the implication of the name being that such people valued white people over black people”<sup>1</sup>. However, this use has not lasted. In the 1970s, ‘snowflake’ was an expression used to describe a white man or a black man who was perceived as acting ‘white’. Sometime later a different meaning was assigned to the term ‘snowflake’, namely to describe someone who has an inflated sense of their own unique personality and a sense of entitlement. As is stated in the *Oxford Online Dictionary* the term ‘snowflake’ now refers to an overly sensitive and easily offended person, or someone who believes they are allowed special treatment on account of their allegedly unique characteristics<sup>2</sup>. The ‘Snowflake generation’ refers to the generation of people who became adults in the 2010s. This generation is commonly viewed as being less resilient and more prone to taking offence than previous ones.

‘Snowflake’ was the 2016 word of the year in *Collins Dictionary*<sup>3</sup>. The increased popularity of the term can be partly accredited to US author Chuck Palahniuk’s 1996 novel *Fight Club*, and the film with the same title made in 1999, which contains the well-known line „You are not special. You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake”<sup>4</sup>. The suggestion is that, like snowflakes, such people are delicate individuals and a slight increase in temperature will see them melt. Although the ‘Snowflake Generation’ is a phrase used a lot these days, the young generation to which the phrase refers considers it an insult. According to research conducted by the insurance firm Aviva in 2017, 72 per cent of 16 to 24 year-olds think this term is unfairly applied; and 74 per cent believe it could have a negative effect on this age group’s mental health<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, medical expert Dr Rachel Uptegrove, Consultant Psychiatrist, of the University of Birmingham argues that the ‘snowflake generation’ of young people who lack resilience does not exist, young people are simply better at expressing their real feelings<sup>6</sup>. It has also been recognised that millennials have been criticised for being ‘thin-skinned’, due to their supposed over-sensitivity and unwillingness to consider opposing views. In

<sup>1</sup> *Merriam Webster*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/the-less-lovely-side-of-snowflake> (dostęp 23 XII 2018).

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford online dictionary*, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/snowflake> (dostęp 23 XII 2018).

<sup>3</sup> *Collins Dictionary*, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/word-lovers-blog/new/top-10-collins-words-of-the-year-2016> (dostęp 26 XII 2018).

<sup>4</sup> *Rudgard O.*, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/12/06/dont-call-us-snowflakes-damages-mental-health-say-young-people> (dostęp 26 XII 2018).

<sup>5</sup> *Aviva, 2017*, [https://www.aviva.com/newsroom/news-releases/2017/12/dont\\_call\\_us\\_snowflakes](https://www.aviva.com/newsroom/news-releases/2017/12/dont_call_us_snowflakes) (dostęp 26 XII 2018).

<sup>6</sup> *Knaption S.*, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2018/07/23/snowflake-label-unfair-young-just-better-showingfeelings-say> (dostęp 26 XII 2018).

order to accommodate the young generation's need to express their emotional suffering some universities have introduced 'safe spaces' and 'cry closets', for students to retreat to and get away from 'micro-aggression'<sup>7</sup>.

In her book, *I Find That Offensive!*, Claire Fox addresses the possible causes of what is known as the 'Generation Snowflake' in a bid for the group to toughen up, become more robust and start making a virtue of the right to be offensive<sup>8</sup>.

While some praise the 'snowflake generation' for their ability to express their feelings in such a free and passionate way, others criticize the group for being weak, over-emotional and simply prone to crying. Nonetheless, these views of the outside world have something in common, namely that the group is either praised or criticised for the very same thing, as some view crying in public with resentment, others applaud it as a statement of humanity. Whether showing one's emotions openly is an act of bravery or a sign of weakness is a somewhat subjective matter. However, why this generation of young people may be so eager to cry, talk about their feelings, and constantly look for suffering is a different matter. Yet another question concerns the role of the media in the creation and promotion of this snowflake image – an image of fragile and hypersensitive youth.

According to Jhally in "advertisement images are neither false nor true reflections of social reality because they are in fact part of social reality" (1990: 135). Concurring with his view, Rutledge Shields & Heinecken add, "[...] advertising needs to be studied as a constituent part of our social reality, not as a distorted reflection of it." (2002: 35) Since advertising portrays social reality relevant to a given nation at a given time, it is worth considering what image of present society is preserved in present-day advertisements in order to appeal to millennial viewers.

In the past, the measure of one's strength lay not only in physical appearance, namely muscularity, but also in the ability not to be overcome with emotions. An image of a physically and mentally tough person was extensively used in the media. A lot has changed since Blue System's 1987 hit "Big boys don't cry", an era of characters strong in body and mind. By the turn of the century, as David Gauntlett states in his book *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*, media producers had become "far more interested in generating 'surprise' than in maintaining coherence and consistency". (Gauntlett 2003: 255). He also adds:

<sup>7</sup> Knapton S., <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2018/07/23/snowflake-label-unfair-young-just-better-showingfeelings-say> (dostęp 26 XII 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Fox C., <https://www.bitebackpublishing.com/books/i-find-that-offensive> (dostęp 26 XII 2018).

The contradictions are important, however, because the multiple messages contribute to the perception of an open realm of possibilities. In contrast with the past – or the modern popular view of the past – we no longer get singular, straightforward messages about ideal types of male and female identities (although certain groups of features are clearly promoted as more desirable than others). Instead, popular culture offers a range of stars, icons and characters from whom we can acceptably borrow bits and pieces of their public persona for use in our own. In addition, of course – and slightly contradictorily – individuals are encouraged to ‘be yourself’, and to be creative – within limits – about the presentation of self. (Gauntlett 2003: 255)

The mass media have come a long way since they promoted stereotypes such as the strong and silent Marlboro man, or the image of the always beautiful and happy housewife. Traits such as the ability to feel hurt, fear, confusion and despair in the past were considered as unmanly. According to Janssens “ [...] one of the most powerful images used not only to represent but also to justify the gendering of the public and the private sphere is the image of the male breadwinner family and the male household head as the sole provider for his dependent wife and children.” (Janssens 1997: 1) Nowadays, however, it is in fact expected from men to be able to show their sensitive side. As Femiano and Nickerson observe: “These narrow masculine standards can lead to discrimination against those who deviate from them. But they can also prevent men themselves from living up to their full potential as human beings”<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the image of a happy housewife performing household chores while wearing high heels, red lipstick and a perfect hairdo has also changed. This time a quiet, beautiful, and obedient Betty Boop<sup>10</sup> was replaced with a tough, self-sufficient, resourceful and independent female.

The image of a perfect family has also been transformed. According to the 1955 *Good House Wife's Guide* a woman's goal was to try to make sure that home was a place of peace, order and tranquillity where the husband could renew himself in body and spirit<sup>11</sup>. However, now a relationship between a man and a woman is more likely to be a partnership, where both parties involved function on equal terms. Furthermore, this partnership can be formed between two females or two males, or it can consist of more than two people altogether. This is a colossal change in the perception of the family unit. According to Bronislaw Malinowski, a pioneer anthropologist, in 1913

<sup>9</sup> Femiano S. and Nickerson M., <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/how-do-media-images-men-affect-our-lives> (dostęp 27 XII 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Longman Dictionary, <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/betty-boop> (dostęp 27 III 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Chang A., <https://www.littlethings.com/1950s-good-housewife-guide> (dostęp 27 XII 2018).

“the nuclear family had to be universal because it filled a basic biological need-caring for and protecting infants and young children. No culture could survive, he asserted, unless the birth of children was linked to both mother and father in legally based parenthood”<sup>12</sup>. However, the image of a strong and independent woman of today, displayed in the mass media, portrays her as more than capable of bringing up a child only by herself. Moreover, this ability is used as a measure of her toughness.

One of the major accomplishments of the late- 20<sup>th</sup>- century feminism(s) has been the widespread recognition that women are “not born but made”- that the process of taking on “feminine” gender attributes begins at birth and requires intensive socialization- and that a given culture’s idea of the ‘perfect woman’ (its gender norms) can shift dramatically in response to changing economic and social conditions. (Dines, Humez 2003: 4-5)

On the other hand, men more often than ever are being portrayed as sensitive and caring (for example Pantene’s ‘Strong is Beautiful’ 2015 Campaign: “Dad-Do”, where NFL players are challenged to do their daughters’ hair in order to show that even macho dads can and should spend quality time with their daughters<sup>13</sup>).

The term ‘family’, regarding the strongest and the most important unit, still stands the elements comprising that entity have changed to reflect and accommodate ever-changing culture. According to N. M. Ashkanasy et al. in *Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate*, culture is a result of human interaction with natural and social environments, which take the form of belief systems (Ashkanasy et al. 2000: 86). Therefore our belief systems have changed to reflect the new cultural elements present in the mass media. Taken as a whole, if a woman is expected to be tough a man is expected to show his feminine side, the notion of family needs to be redefined in order to accommodate the new trends. It can be assumed that there is a general tendency to promote diversity.

While the US media focused entirely on the physical aspects such as physical fitness, where the typical macho man was a tall, muscularly built so-called ‘self-made man’, in Britain, above all, dominated an image of a man portrayed in opposition to the image of native populations of colonized nations. In other words, an ‘Englishman’ had to be and foremost a gentleman, always in full command of his emotions, guided by reason and courage

<sup>12</sup> *Encyclopedia.com*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-and-social-reform/sociology-general-terms-and-concepts/nuclear-family> (dostęp 28 XII 2018).

<sup>13</sup> *YouTube, Pantene*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCKTWIzniXU> (dostęp 27 III 2019).

alone, reserved and disciplined. In literature, such an image was presented by R. Kipling in “White Man’s Burden” and in the poem “If”. Such stereotypes survived until the end of the 20th century.

Moreover, the UK was one of the last countries in Europe where corporal punishment was abolished in schools (Pickering 1998: 70). On the other hand, rock music in this country – androgenic and emotional subculture of Glam Rock, or New Romantic music – could have had a direct impact on the cultural changes reflecting a new trend of showing affection.

Yet another issue is the specificity of the British media, which have a centuries-old tradition and have developed to some extent independently from the rest of the world. Nowadays, the perception of traditional roles, namely those of a man and a woman in a society could be a result of colonial legacy, some youth subcultures, and American influence. The current generation therefore tries, on the one hand, to express their emotionality, and on the other hand objects to be treated as ‘snowflakes’ – sensitive and easy to hurt individuals, as this is contrary to the foundations of British culture, where identity was formed in relation to the more impulsive, emotional and uncontrollable indigenous subjects of the Empire.

The media, as we know it, is a powerful everyday tool to inform, entertain, inspire, report, investigate and campaign. It surrounds us – from billboards to television programmes, news-stands to radio, and every corner online. What we read and hear shapes our worldview, influences our opinions, and forms part of our identities<sup>14</sup>.

Therefore, the images created and promoted by it are deeply rooted in our lives. These images become norms for our beliefs and stereotypes for us to recognise.

In the past, being different was more than disapproved of. It was often a cause for bullying, laughter and sarcasm and even hatred. The term ‘difference’ here must be understood in the general manner. Difference in appearance, in the fashion sense, difference in beliefs or behaviour were considered unpleasant and disturbing. However, as the general public mood has shifted, and in order to reflect better the ever-changing and developing human nature, the common stereotypes upheld in the media have become replaced. Diversity has quickly become a new buzzword and a trend promoting the message that it is good to be different.

New types of advertisement, shows and series started to appear on daytime TV dealing with many issues that in the past were considered distressing,

<sup>14</sup> *Diversity in Media Awards, 2018*, <http://www.diversityinmediaawards.com> (dostęp 30 X 2018).

uncomfortable or just simply wrong. It would have been impossible in the past to see a commercial where a man is crying while resting his head on a woman's shoulder while she is portrayed as the strong one in the relationship. Such a commercial is now being shown on TV with the message that it is good to show emotions<sup>15</sup>. Of course, in the past, it would have been a woman crying on a man's shoulder, but then this image would not make such an impact on the viewer, as the woman has always been considered as the more emotional party. This stereotype has just become de-stereotyped. Yet another example from the realm of TV advertisements, depicts a man shaving his legs, where the message created by the Gillette razor company reads "the best men don't just look good on the outside, they take a good look inside; they let it out and hug it out"<sup>16</sup>. Thus, it represents a considerable change from the way similar products made by the same company were advertised in the past.

In a 1950 TV commercial, two white adult males are fishing while discussing a new Gillette product, moments later the same two men are shown shaving next to a pickup truck while camping in the forest<sup>17</sup>. This simple method of advertising a product has come a long way since then. Judging by modern-day criteria, it would not shock nor surprise in any way and therefore it would not have any impact on the viewer. On the other hand, showing man's feminine side creates a different perspective. If we consider the idea that the main purpose of advertisements is to sell goods, then the idea of portraying men as weak and mentally fragile would be understandable from the point of view of, for example, the cosmetics industry. These days as many beauty products can be found for men as there are for women. The retail industry is thriving due to new possibilities created by yet another aspect of the promotion of diversity. The 2018 Superdrug Christmas Advert depicts all genders, all ages, and all races, and by doing so it promotes its products not to one but to all possible markets. With words 'glam', 'fun' and 'generous' the commercial depicts a man in a pink jumper wearing lipstick, mixed race families throwing snowballs, a transgender man wearing a dress and glam makeup, and an elderly woman with a funky haircut. In this thirty-second commercial, the Superdrug retail company managed to advertise its goods to all potential customers in a very subtle way, by embracing their differences

<sup>15</sup> *You Tube Gillette UK 2018*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xpLSsoJNrA> (dostęp 30 X 2018).

<sup>16</sup> *You Tube Gillette UK 2018*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xpLSsoJNrA> (dostęp 30 X 2018).

<sup>17</sup> *You Tube, Gillette 1950s*, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHxh\\_7UJDUY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHxh_7UJDUY) (dostęp 27 III 2019).

and promoting their uniqueness<sup>18</sup>. Another giant retailer using the same principle to appeal to the masses is Boots with its campaign 'it's not just how it makes you look'. In a thirty-second commercial, this retailer uses the image of diversity to promote its goods to the public. The Boots advertisement depicts an elderly white female, a black female, a mixed-race female, a teenage girl, a black transgender woman and a woman who is a double leg amputee, all standing together hand in hand with a slogan that reads 'let's feel good'<sup>19</sup>.

The press have always been known for their liking for controversy. These days more than ever, diversity is used as a main feature in many articles, after all it is the news that sells newspapers and making the news thought-provoking will sell them faster, "[...] in an era of globalization, one must be aware of the global networks that produce and distribute culture in the interests of profit and corporate hegemony" (Kellner 2011: 11). Nowadays, people are trying to show their individuality and exceptionality in order to get noticed. It is not enough to be a super model in order to be featured on the front page; what can help is having unprecedented views, or unusual appearance. One example of this is the supermodel Chantelle Winnie. Winnie suffers from vitiligo, a condition characterized by patches of the skin losing their pigment. Nonetheless, her "skin condition has made her career and become a symbol for diversification and progression. Her beauty is undeniable and her skin breaks down barriers of what is considered beautiful"<sup>20</sup>. It was Winnie's different look that got her noticed and singled out, and "whether she likes it or not, she's a walking advertisement for outsiderdom first, and a model for stuff second. Her skin is more striking than any product she could sell"<sup>21</sup>.

There are many further examples that we can draw on when researching the topic of the diversity present in the mass media. The de-stereotypization of common views sparks discussions that on occasion results in controversy. Such an example is Gillette's new, 2019, advertising campaign 'We believe: the best men can be'. The commercial, aired exclusively online, addressed issues, such as sexual harassment and violence between boys, in a bid to combat some of the negative stereotypes attached to masculinity. Nevertheless, the advertisement, showing sexism in films and in boardrooms as well as scenes of violence between youngsters with a background commentary 'Bullying,

<sup>18</sup> *You Tube, Superdrug Christmas Advert 2018*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxx3YynpN44> (dostęp 30 X 2018).

<sup>19</sup> *You Tube, Boots*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL7SJ4p9ZSs> (dostęp 20 II 2019).

<sup>20</sup> *Barlow E., 2015*, <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/feb/15/chantelle-winnie-model-vitiligo> (dostęp 31 XII 2018).

<sup>21</sup> *Barlow E., 2015*, <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/feb/15/chantelle-winnie-model-vitiligo> (dostęp 31 XII 2018).

the MeToo movement against sexual harassment and toxic masculinity', was immediately targeted by viewers<sup>22</sup>. Despite the initial fears for Gillette's customers boycotting the firm it has been stated that "sales have not budged since the ad came out on 13 January, Moeller [chief financial officer at Procter and Gamble] added that Gillette's goal of connecting 'more meaningfully with younger consumer groups' has been achieved"<sup>23</sup>. Since concepts of fragility and hypersensitivity are greatly associated with the image of snowflake society, media portray and promote this diversity- sensitive orientation to look appealing to masses.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought many changes in the way society's values and norms are understood and practised. The new generation has brought a new level of openness and tolerance. Being different in regard to appearance or beliefs is not disapproved of, but on the contrary it is often praised and applauded. When it comes to voicing views and opinions the 'snowflake generation' tends to do it very openly and in a very emotional manner. Some may consider such behaviour melodramatic and exaggerated but to others it shows how passionate they are about their beliefs and views. The mass media exercise this group's desire for individuality and frequently employ the image of diversity. According to Jhally: "A critique of advertising has to start by giving people permission to recognise the strength of the images of advertising, of where the power rests. From that we can start to unfold the exact role that advertising plays in our culture from a critical perspective" (1990: 137).

The generation that has been labelled in a derogatory way as 'snowflakes' could yet provide an illustration of the idea that every revolution carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. The label actually turns out to be ironically appropriate in one way at least. When we place them under a microscope, we discover that, naturally, 'no two snowflakes are alike'. In this way, the mass media may be revealing, rather than creating, the fact that people are all different from each other, and always have been, in every way: in opinions, skills, personality, preferences etc. What may be different today is that there is less pressure in society to cover up those differences and they are free to be aired in public.

<sup>22</sup> *YouTube, Gillette, 2019*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPPF3sZIo-Q> (dostęp 27 III 2019).

<sup>23</sup> *Petter O., 2019*, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gillette-advert-toxic-masculinity-sales-impact-a8745966.html> (dostęp 27 III 2019).

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