

Marcin Gołębnik*

INVENTING A RESEARCHER'S CULTURE IN THE SEMI-PERIPHERY, BORDERLANDS, AND BOUNDARIES (NOT JUST DISCIPLINES)

ABSTRACT: In my paper, I attempt to describe and interpret my own academic identity by focusing on my (auto)biographical and auto-ethnographic trajectory as a researcher and participant in academic culture, shaped at the boundaries of disciplines and academic institutions in a semi-peripheral country such as Poland. In the first part of the text, referring to Wallerstein's concept of worlds-systems, I present the paradigmatic changes taking place in the discipline I practice – cultural anthropology – since the 1990s to the present day in conjunction with the pressures on the academia of non-English-speaking peripheral and semi-peripheral countries from English-speaking core countries, in order to reveal the biographical experience of the place of my own academic enculturation in a traditional university (ethnology at AMU), shaping the academic culture of which I am a user/bearer. In the following part of the paper, I analyse the relevance for the shift in my biography as a researcher and academic teacher of taking up a position in a specific academic environment and institution – in a Wrocław-based non-public university with academic aspirations (ULS) and the importance of the experience of being part of the research networks of the ESREA organization. In the final section of the essay, I focus on reconstructing how educational work with so-called non-traditional students, focused on their undertaking explorations within their own culture through various techniques of the ethnographic method, redefines my research and teaching practices and shapes my current academic identity.

KEYWORDS: auto-ethnography of the researcher, academic semi-peripheries, boundaries of cultural anthropology and pedagogy (education), teaching cultural anthropology, ethnography in academic teaching, collective ethnographic research.

No, I don't like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that can be done. I don't like work—no man does—but I like what is in the work—the chance to find yourself. Your own reality—for yourself, not for others—which no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means (Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*).

Introduction

The statement by Marlowe, the protagonist of *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad, 2007), can be applied to academic work, including writing, which is both the main and final form of activity/action in the social sciences and humanities. It is possible to dislike it. The moment of writing is often associated with a sense of alienation from the outside world and can sometimes be a source of desperation. Writing is not a collective activity (except for multi-author texts). It involves an individual effort. In addition, as in the case of the main character of *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad, 2007), it is in many ways entangled

* **Marcin Gołębnik** – University of Lower Silesia, Poland; e-mail: marcin.golebniak@dsw.edu.pl; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5954-5978>.

in the (post)colonial rules of the game. Working in the academy, in the field of the social sciences (through writing but also didactics), at the same time creates a relatively (when related to other professions) large space (as in Marlowe's Congolese work) for the discovery of oneself and one's own inner reality and the realisation, expression and nurturing of individualism, subjectivity, fidelity to one's own beliefs, rebelliousness. It is no coincidence that I use an analogy in a text addressed to an English-speaking audience, the source of which is a quotation from Joseph Conrad's book. Thanks to this, I do not have to explain in the Introduction the context of the statement about being – in his case – on the borderland of cultures, which is related to the issue of the dominance of English-speaking traditions (a type of academic (post)colonialism), as pointed out by Rob Evans in the introductory essay citing, among other researchers, the judgement of Pertti Alastuutari. It seems interesting in this context that, on the one hand, in the consciousness of readers in Poland, Conrad, born in Berydyczów¹ as Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, exists only thanks to his translators; on the other hand, the author of *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* and several other outstanding works of British literature, or more broadly of English-language literature, did not start writing in English until he was in his twenties.

In the case of cultural anthropology in Poland, a discussion about the pressures exerted on researchers – in this case non-English speaking semi-peripheries – has been going on for almost twenty years. It has been conducted not only within the field, but also between representatives of centres of research such as the resonating discussion in the community around the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) between Michał Buchowski and Chris Hann (Buchowski, 2005; Hann, 2005) or in texts by other researchers (e.g. Cervinkova, 2012).

An invitation from Rob Evans provoked me to reflect on these and other practices undertaken by me as a researcher and, more broadly, as a participant, bearer, user and to some extent modifier of university (academic) culture. However, it is difficult for me to provide comprehensive answers to so many of the expansive questions formulated in the invitation to write this paper. In the following, I address those issues that I consider to be 'knotty' in my trajectory as a researcher and academic. In this attempt to look at my own history and identity, I experience immediately the difficulty of describing and interpreting my own situatedness so familiar to researchers working in the field of autoethnography, which Margaret Mead metaphorically and somewhat sarcastically commented on in relation to the research activities of anthropologists thus: if a fish

¹ Berdychiv, now located in Ukraine.

were an anthropologist the last thing it would discover would be water². I return to the thread of these difficulties later in the article.

Letter from the semi-periphery

I am writing this text from a peculiar place which, due to its many levels/dimensions (geographical-spatial, cultural, disciplinary or professional), can be called borderland/boundary on the one hand, and on the other hand, following the now somewhat dated concept of Immanuel Wallerstein, can also be called semi-peripheral (Wallerstein, 2004)³. Of particular relevance to my positioning in the academic world is the fact that this place, belonging according to the typology of the author of World-Systems Analysis to the semi-peripheries, and characterised (particularly in the world of academia) not only by a distinct language and research traditions, but also by culture and influences on the region of central and, above all, eastern Europe⁴, can also be considered post-colonial⁵. An important element of this spatial-historical-political condition and the fact that my research trajectory is linked to one of Wallerstein's world-systems are the processes of the so-called 'internationalisation of science' and the associated scoring system for publications and grants.

The interest in and particular importance of the context of place is characteristic of the scientific discipline I represent. On the one hand, it is *place* that forms much of the basis for cultural relativism, one of the chief theoretical achievements of this science, and is significant for how culture (a key, framework, even its axial conception) is practised and experienced by communities and individuals. For *place* here constitutes (...) something of a casting mould, modelling much of our behaviour (Hall cited in Godlewski et al. eds., 2005: 140). On the other hand, through a specific (because field-based) model of research, the practice of anthropology (or more precisely ethnography) is a spatial practice understood as being *in the field*, immersed in it (Geertz, 1973). The distance (of place) from which the researcher-ethnographer comes makes it possible (at least

² A similar phrase – *the last thing a fish would notice would be the water* is also attributed to Ralph Linton, another anthropologist representing American Configurationism.

³ Wallerstein's typology of worlds-systems: core, semi-peripheral, peripheral.

⁴ Here arguments of a cultural (linguistic) nature can be cited, which confirm this. For example, the spelling with the locative preposition for the names of countries politically, economically and socially subordinate to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: **na** (over) – na Litwie, na Białorusi, na Ukrainie (in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine), as opposed to independently autonomous countries, for which the preposition **w** (in) is employed (w Anglii, w Hiszpanii, w Belgii – in England, Spain, Belgium). Interestingly, in the case of Ukraine, the new form was adopted – **w** Ukrainie – after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

⁵ Although in Poland, indicating such an affiliation often provokes opposition in public debate. Poland is always a victim or a noble friendly state.

in classically understood anthropology) to perceive and reveal phenomena, practices, phenomena that pertain to the area in which the field research is carried out and that are difficult to perceive from the perspective of the user of (from within) a particular culture. It is, on the one hand, therefore through *remoteness* and, on the other hand, through the desire *to get closer* to the culture of the research site, that it is possible to invent a culture not only of others, but also the culture of which the researcher is a carrier. It is contact with another culture that makes it possible to perceive the peculiarities, assumptions and practices of one's own culture (Wagner, 2004).

In my case, Lower Silesia has become such a place to invent a culture that is other and my own – a region (“voivodeship”) very different in this aspect from Greater Poland, from which I myself and my family come. The dramatic events of World War II for Poland and Europe, and the defeat of Nazi Germany, resulted in the shifting of Poland's borders to the west, as a result of which almost the entire Schlesien region⁶, along with the historic capital of the region, was incorporated into Polish territory, with Breslau itself becoming Polish Wrocław⁷. After 1945, the process of displacement of the German population from there west to Germany began, and the action of moving the Polish population from the eastern territories of Poland, which were incorporated into the Soviet Union after the war (today these areas are the territory of mainly Ukraine, but also Belarus and Lithuania) to the areas abandoned by the Germans. Lower Silesia became (like Warmia, Masuria, Eastern and Western Pomerania and the Lubusz Land) the destination of this institutionally enforced resettlement of the population from the so-called Eastern Borderlands of the First Republic to the so-called Recovered Territories as the western area was called in communist propaganda, an act that was supposed to be an expression of historical justice, given that as I mention in footnote 7 below this area belonged to the dominion of the Piast dynasty in the Middle Ages). In addition to the Poles displaced from the east, the place was also settled by Polish immigrants motivated primarily by economic interests (*e.g.*, from Greater Poland or central Poland), as well as groups in different ways inconvenienced by the new communist authorities, who like those expelled from the east were also affected by the process of institutional forced settlement: namely, Polish repatriates from France, the Benelux countries, areas of former Yugoslavia (Ligus, 2019) or Romanian Bukovina, and national and ethnic minorities (Ukrainians, Jews and Lemkos). Political refugees from Greece and Macedonia, whose situation was, however, specific (their evacuation from the civil war areas was part of the logic of the beginning of the Cold War con-

⁶ Part of the area of German Silesia was incorporated into the former Czechoslovakia.

⁷ In its turbulent history, Wrocław belonged successively to the Polish state of the Piasts, the Czech crown, the Austrian Habsburg Empire and for the longest time (for several hundred years) to the Prussian state.

frontation between the Eastern Bloc and the West), constituted a separate migratory wave in this post-war period and has been described in several scholarly studies (e.g. Nowicka, 2008; Gołębniak, 2009a, 2009b, 2016; Wojecki, 1989). In my texts, I refer to the political refugees from Greece as a *victim diaspora*, due to the forced nature of this migration, its institutional, quasi-military nature and the impossibility of returning to Greece for the next several decades (Gołębniak, 2009a; 2009b). This ethnic, national and cultural mosaic is the foundation of the identity of the inhabitants of today's Wrocław and Lower Silesia. Elements of diverse histories, cultures, customs, traditions and practices are transmitted today in family groups or local communities.

This diversity of influences of history, cultures, customs, traditions and cultural practices is evidenced by the permanent exhibition at the Ethnographic Museum in Wrocław ("Dolnoślązacy. Pamięć, kultura, tożsamość – Lower Silesians. Memory, culture, identity"), where I used to teach part of my cultural anthropology classes. Its counterpart, *i.e.* the permanent exhibition at the Poznań Ethnographic Museum (as well as the open-air museum in Dziekanowice), to which I also invite students, has a different character. They represent two types of identity. The first focuses on the process of change associated with its settlement by Polish ethnos after 1945. The second emphasizes the continuity and reproduction (transmission) of (peasant) identity and culture from the Greater Poland region, largely shaped after the arrival of settlers from northern Germany, the Netherlands and southern Germany (Bamberg) in the region in the 18th century. The culture and identity of the latter was characterized by a clear distinctiveness and peculiarity, which at the same time left its mark on the culture of Wielkopolska, becoming part of it⁸.

Building and inventing one's own academic identity – trajectory and important turns

The studies in ethnology⁹, which I undertook at the Faculty of History at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (UAM), one of the most important centres in this discipline in Poland (along with ethnology at the University of Warsaw, the Jagiellonian University in Cracow or the University of Łódź), were on the one hand typically academic with a heavy theoretical component, on the other hand, the programme included

⁸ It is represented in a separate institution in Poznań, which is the Museum of the Poznań Bampers (*Muzeum Bambrów Poznańskich*).

⁹ This is also how this field of study is called today in Poland despite the changes taking place in it described further on.

many elements related to the ethnographic¹⁰, folkloristic or museological tradition. The mid-1990s was the moment when I started to study and at the same time the time of the turnaround taking place in Polish ethnology/anthropology – from folk studies to the Anglo-Saxon (mainly American) way of practising this discipline/science. This transition, which has been a hot topic in the discipline for a long time (e.g. Baer, 2006; Jasiewicz, 2006), is also an important context for addressing the problem of the methodological foundations of ethnographic research, also present in the texts I have written (Gołębniak, 2017; Gołębniak, 2022). At the same time, this turn was part of a broader shift in the social sciences and humanities which was associated with the collapse of the socialist state and political changes toward the Westernization of society, affecting the academic world as well. My thesis, which was based on several months of field research in Fiji conducted in the Indian diaspora community (Gołębniak, 2001), which I carried out as part of the activities of the research association of ethnology students¹¹, was part of the model of *anthropology abroad* (Marcus & Fisher, 1986), and its mode of practice derived and transferred from the *centres to the peripheries*. This *modus operandi* in anthropology, which in the Polish context presupposes research activities conducted in non-European communities using the field method, rapidly became important. This was in addition to the still existing activities of a folkloric nature, and research further inspired by the centres, involving researchers' interest in contemporary cultural phenomena and particularly phenomena related to domestic anthropology such as popular culture. An exemplification of such a paradigmatic shift occurring in the 1990s can be seen in the fact that in my MA seminar (1998-2000), UAM students conducted field research in Kazakhstan, India and Venezuela. Research into popular culture and the theoretical perspectives adopted were also inspired from the *centres* and were situated in the area of what Marcus and Fisher called *anthropology at home*.

At the University of Lower Silesia, the university where I took a position after graduation, I encountered a different academic world to the one I came from. The young institution, non-public but with academic aspirations, established in the second half of the nineties, did not separate researchers representing different academic disciplines and instead supported cross-boundary work through joint activities of their representatives – seminars, conferences, research projects or publications, including academics

¹⁰ Ethnography understood as a research tradition associated with the activities of researchers from continental Europe – I describe this distinction between understanding ethnography as a research approach and understanding it as folklore in a 2017 article on educational ethnography, among others.

¹¹ At the time, there was no developed grant system in Poland, so the oceanography section of the ethnology students' research association to which I belonged found sponsors (including one of the large tobacco corporations) who were interested in advertising products in an *exotic context* on marketing platforms that were new at the time, such as websites (second half of 2000).

coming from Wallersteinian 'core' centres¹², but also from semi-peripheral countries (such as researchers from Israel, for example). Another element shaping this otherness (in relation to public universities) was the different profile of the students studying there, especially in its early days. These were mainly so-called non-traditional students, undertaking their studies on a part-time basis, most often working in the professions, which led to the need to redefine the relationship between theory and practice, both at the institutional level (educational programs), but also at the individual level (the way didactics were practiced).

In order to teach in this new place, I had to rethink issues related to the discipline I studied in an environment (*i.e.* UAM) where research practice was understood on the one hand as research in predominantly non-European communities, and on the other hand as museology, folkloristics, or other elements pertaining to peasant culture. It prompted me to redefine my own identity as a researcher, which led me to turn to *anthropology at home* and take up practical problems. This was probably the most important turn in my trajectory/biography as a researcher and academic.

Teaching non-traditional part-time students and the new non-public institution where I started working taught me new things. I began to invent a completely different dimension, directly applied and practical, of cultural anthropology. It was thus the peculiarities of the Lower Silesian University and the students I teach that largely determined my professional identity. What made this possible became ethnography understood as a research approach or perspective, creating, through the creation in my didactics, a space for students to invent through their autoethnographies and ethnographies their own culture – in relation to their professions (the dominant group of students in those early days were teachers and special educators).

These ethnographies carried out by people not associated with the discipline (Gołębniak, 2021) turned out over time to be the basis for the way I teach cultural anthropology to students, for whom it was usually the first contact with this kind of method of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Hence, today, after twenty years of working in academia¹³, when someone in conversation says that I am an anthropologist, I deny it, pointing out that I am rather a teacher of anthropology. This teaching provides most often, in my case, the impetus to undertake research explorations into certain problems/phenomena I encounter while conducting classes.

¹² Biblioteka Współczesnej Myśli Społecznej Wydawnictwa Naukowego DSW (The Library of Contemporary Social Thought series of the DSW Academic Publishing House) in which books by Zygmunt Bauman, Ernest Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Peter Sloterdijk, among others, have been published.

¹³ Mostly I forget about my long tenure, I become aware of it sometimes thanks to comments from students, such as the one I heard last year when one of the psychology students during a class at the Ethnographic Museum said: "my mother also enjoyed the anthropology classes you conducted".

At the same time, in both of these aspects of cultural anthropology – teaching and research – there is a message that has been part of the anti-discriminatory nature of the discipline's direction from the inception of modern anthropology until today, which can be considered part of the (professional) culture of anthropologists. I sometimes say that by profession I am, therefore, in addition to being a teacher or researcher, an anti-xenophobe and anti-racist.

The elements I have outlined here of my biography as a representative of the academy allow me to speak about my professional trajectory more as a constant breaking of disciplinary, institutional, and other barriers than about affiliation to a specific research tradition.

Instead, I can write about affiliation with a particular milieu in the form of an episodic, though for my research identity and its trajectory highly significant activity in several of the research networks of the European Society for Research in Education of Adults (ESREA): *Between Global and Local – Adult Learning and Communities; Life History and Biography; Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms*. I have been active in the role of co-organizer of conferences, as a member of scientific committees, as speaker, reviewer, as well as author of texts (Gołębnik, 2009a) or co-editor of post-conference materials (Gołębnik & Starnawski eds., 2014). In the case of the Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms research network, this included ethnographic-biographical research conducted jointly with Simon Warren and Marcin Starnawski on processes of internationalization of the academy in different local contexts carried out in Poland, Ireland and Portugal, the results of which were discussed at seminars and conferences in Wrocław, Galway and Porto, *i.e.* in local academic communities. On the one hand, all of these experiences with ESREA underlined the phenomenon of academy – colonization of academic discourse, linguistic domination, epistemological domination, dominance and the missionary action of the centres, also encountering compradorism and compradors¹⁴ or the unreflective adoption of modes of interpretation or models to build individual academic careers. On the other hand, they also provided an opportunity to learn about approaches, perspectives and ways of doing things that I had not encountered before – engaged or activist research, for instance – in the heavily rigid world of the Polish academy. The dimension of interpersonal contacts and exchange of professional experiences in the course of activities in ESREA, of researchers representing different academic worlds and also different statuses, both those from outside Poland, such as cooperation with Rob Evans or Simon Warren, but also with

¹⁴ Researchers coming from the periphery or semi-periphery undergoing academic training in the centres and using linguistic competence or centre-based (core-based) epistemologies to recolonise their place of origin.

researchers from the home institution – with Marcin Starnawski, Ewa Kurantowicz, Hana Cervinkova or Rozalia Ligus – cannot be overestimated.

An additional important context related to my trajectory as a researcher, which due to its complexity and volume would easily warrant a separate paper – are changes to the functioning of higher education institutions in Poland. These changes are part of the global trends I indicated above, as well as national trends, related to political changes and turbulence, and they are related, too, to significant technological developments. When I began my work as a university teacher and researcher, the peak of modernity was the use of Internet sources and an overhead projector. Today with AI (Artificial Intelligence) it seems that the world of academia is entering a wholly new era¹⁵.

For ethnography¹⁶

Ethnography is an element that not only unifies my teaching and research activities, but as interrelated and inducing synergy, it is their common denominator. In many cases, ethnographic activities carried out as part of my educational work with students led me to address issues whose importance I had not realized before, and which then led me to undertake independent field research, as was the case with the topic of Greek refugees and the life of the diaspora in Lower Silesia (Gołębnik, 2016).

Ethnography was and is for me also a Conrad-like opportunity to find myself, my own reality – for myself, not for others. By this I mean ethnographic activities requiring a great deal of work, but not crowned with the publication of a text, which, in the context of the systemic, structural and economic conditions of the status of researchers (the researcher is worth as much as the points they bring to the institution to which they are affiliated) is an action to its own detriment, including that related to academic standing and remuneration (in the economic sense). The activities I am referring to are ethnographies of a collective nature, co-created with students, having a form other than textual.

As an example of such an activity, I consider projects during classes which resulted in films created on the basis of ethnographic and auto-ethnographic recognitions, depicting the culture of the students' communities of origin. These ethnographies, prepared under the somewhat provocative banner of *Be a native to each other*, were an attempt to present in the form of an (auto)ethnographic film the various identities of the students, primarily those of a local and regional nature. Recognizing these

¹⁵ One may wonder on this occasion whether AI will become a tool to enable a 'more equal' academy or whether it will lead to an even greater domination of the centres? I would rather bet on the latter.

¹⁶ A paraphrase of the title of Walford's text of the same title (Walford, 2009).

identities was possible thanks to a series of exercises and workshops in addition to the lecture part presenting the theoretical and methodological background, which were the next stages of preparation for the challenge of making an auto-ethnographic film. Conducting interviews in small groups, we focused on linguistic practices (local, regional, ethnolects or dialects), ritual practices, symbols, artefacts passed down in family groups, recipes and observations (using video documentation) of the immediate environment (apartment, house, immediate neighbourhood), as well as analysis of changes in them over time (through analysis of archival photographs) and analysis of family photographs. This part of the work was related to Roy Wagner's invention of culture (2004). As the students discovered layers of different cultural content in their biographies, they became each other's natives, culturally different from each other to such an extent that their descriptions of certain practices constituted an experience of culture shock.

This laid the foundation for the next stage of work, which was the process of script-writing, filming and editing. At this stage, I played the role of facilitator – an attentive, supportive and sensitive partner in the creation process trying to sensitize filmmakers to substantive and technical issues, but also issues of an ethical nature in autoethnography. As a result of these activities, a series of documentaries was created, some of which I had the opportunity to present and discuss during a presentation at the 2021 ESREA (COVID-19 times and online) conference of the Life History and Biography research network organized by ULS in Wrocław.

Another example of ethnographic activities, the result of which was not a published text, but in this case, a photographic exhibition entitled *Balconies, French windows and loggias* of Wrocław, was the outcome of research carried out in two modernist housing estates in Wrocław – Szczepin and Popowice. These mega-estates, disliked and disrespected aesthetically/architecturally by the inhabitants of Wrocław today (as opposed to the post-German bourgeois Old Town and Downtown), I found to be an interesting area for ethnographic research. This is because they represent two factors that can form the basis of analyses of the place/space of the city from the point of view of Michel de Certeau's concept of strategies and tactics (de Certeau, 1984). The authors behind the concept of both estates (the marriage of the creative energies of Maria and Witold Molicki), created them in accordance with the assumptions of the Athens Charter¹⁷ as a healthy and rationally designed place of residence. This type of urban solution is often considered a model elsewhere. Both estates were built in a part of the city almost completely destroyed during the warfare in 1945, forming the basis of the districts of today's Wrocław that were created from scratch.

¹⁷ The Athens Charter was created under the leadership of the eminent architect and urban planner Le Corbusier.

In de Certeau's terms, this urban-architectural project – an expression by the estate's creators of rational, modernist planning – represents a *strategy* based primarily on function. Analysis of the several hundred photographs of the estates taken by students in the field revealed, however, that the eponymous balconies, french windows and loggias of the study represented what the author of *The practice of everyday life* called *tactics*: in other words, the individual creations/practices of residents of the apartment blocks. Analysing the photographs taken by the students revealed not only the elaborate architectural typology of the spaces studied, but also (and perhaps most importantly) the tactics adopted by the residents. In-depth interpretations of residents' culture revealed how they had given the balconies, French windows and loggias new functions not provided for in the original strategies of the estate's creators. This was expressed in the residents' remodelling of what they found, arranging the various original spaces, for instance, as places for recreation, exercise, as spaces for pets, gardens, or places to keep wholly unnecessary bric-a-brac. On the other hand, the study revealed how the residents would disregard modernist assumptions entirely, evincing a lack of sensitivity to the intended overall effect of the architecture, and in some cases demonstrating extreme selfishness by disrupting the space of the estate through individual choice of colours for their painting, unsightly window gratings, canopies, or by wilfully punching holes for specific installations, *etc.*

Conclusion – Krojcek¹⁸

In the title of this paper, I referred to Wagner's concept of cultural invention, which, according to him, we are dealing with in cultural anthropology (Wagner, 2004). This invention of culture is based on the conviction of the author of *The Invention of Culture* that culture has a dynamic, not static character, does not exist in an objective way, but takes place in the course of contact and reflection on it, is redefined through interactions, experiences and their interpretations (Wagner, 2004). Inventing my culture in this way as a representative of the academic community is an attempt to understand who I am as a researcher and academician, and, at the same time, to understand the substance and selection of the subject of my research and the way it is planned, designed and implemented.

Following Wagner's concept (Wagner, 2004), I assume that I am not a neutral observer of my own culture (as a researcher), but an active participant in it. Hence, the perspective I represent and the experiences I have lived (not only professional experiences) are relevant to what I perceive, how I interpret and construct the narrative of the texts

¹⁸ A Silesian term derived from the German *kreuzen* (to cross) and *das Kreuz* (the Cross).

I write. The hermeneutic nature of this article is related to the symbolic anthropology represented by Wagner, whose texts I found close (useful) to me in the course of attempting to look at my own culture (not only as a researcher, but also as an academic).

In the autoethnographic film prepared by one of the students in the course I teach, there is a sentence uttered by his father, one of the protagonists of the performed story: “And who are you? – Hanyś? (*Silesian*), Gorol? (*Pole*), or maybe Krojcok? (*ethnically and culturally crossed*)” It seems to me that I can best employ this third category to indicate my own identity position in the world of academia.

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