

Andrzej Gwóźdź (Hrsg.)

Film als Baustelle

Das Kino und seine Paratexte

Film Under Re-Construction

Cinema and Its Paratexts

SCHÜREN

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Vorwort

Der Film gleicht heute einer permanenten Baustelle, an der ständig gebaut wird, wo man ununterbrochen verbessert, nachbessert, eingreift, modifiziert, recycelt... Kurzum: er wird zu einer Bastelarbeit schlechthin, zum Objekt mannigfaltiger Eingriffe, die sowohl sein Dasein als auch seine Funktionen ständig ins Wanken bringen.

Aber wissen wir überhaupt noch, was ein Film ist? Oder wird im Zeitalter seiner Brennung nur noch eine neue Metapher dessen gemeint, was er einst war? Zwar gehen wir immer noch (manchmal) ins Kino, aber er umgibt uns mittlerweile überall: zu Hause, im Flugzeug, im Museum oder im Internet. Dort vor allem und in der Hosentasche auf einem Handy- oder iPod-Display. Die Brüder Skladanowsky begannen ihre Filmgeschichte Ende des XIX. Jahrhunderts mit dem Daumenkino – heute folgen wir ihnen mit dem Hosentaschenkino, das gleichzeitig ein Telefon und eine Schreibmaschine, eine Navigationshilfe, ein Fernseher und vieles Anderes ist und morgen noch vieles mehr.

Was analysieren wir eigentlich jetzt, wenn wir meinen, dass wir den Film unter die Lupe nehmen? Die Schrift – ist sie selbst nicht zu einem visuellen Spektakel geworden, den wir baustellenartig auswerten: zum Beispiel im Vorspann oder in der Filmerzählung selbst. Der Film, zu einem transmedialen und transitiven Event aufgeputscht, zirkuliert in verschiedenen Netzen para-, meta- und peritextueller Zonen, ständigen Remediationen ausgesetzt. Und dennoch bleibt er immer noch ein Film.

Die thematische Breite dieses Buches erstreckt sich vom Vorspann zum Nano-Film, von der Schrift zu den digitalen Videospiele und vom Trailer bis zu verschiedenen Strategien der Demystifikation und Täuschung. Autoren aus Deutschland, Polen, Tschechien, Korea und den Niederlanden haben sich zusammengetan, um der Problematik des Films als Baustelle nachzugehen und einige Blicke auf den nicht enden wollenden Text über andere Texte zu werfen.

Andrzej Gwóźdź
Katowice, im Winter 2008

I Zirkular

Circulation and the Metaculture of Newness

A notion of culture from the very beginning, that is to say from the moment when it first became an epistemological category with rather blurry boundaries, ambiguous and changing, seems to function on two separate levels in a double sense. First of all it is an analytical category, an explanatory variable called upon in scientific discourse. Anthropologists usually reduce the differences and similarities between communities to the cultural differences, thus to the divergence of the collectively transferred and conventionally embedded concepts of truth, beauty and efficacy, which shape particular lifestyles. For an anthropologist, particularly for a supporter of pluralism¹, the wealth of the social world derives from the diversity of aims, values and images of the world, that manifest themselves in language, law and the everyday practices of self-monitoring groups.

The notion of culture has long ago stopped fulfilling only a cognitive role, becoming an element of the collective self-consciousness. To cite Pierre Bourdieu: culture belongs to the circle of categories creating «those places in discourse in which an entire group meets and recognizes itself».² While Bourdieu means first and foremost intellectual milieus, Charles Taylor additionally separates the sphere of social theory from the social imaginary. The first one uses theoretical notions, whereas the second is based on representations, slogans, myths, tales and other elements of collective identity discourse. The theory is always a minority domain and the social imaginary has a mass character, from time to time comprising the whole

1 I understand pluralism according to the intentions of Richard A. Shweder. A cultural pluralist, as he claims, begins with a universal truth, which we may refer to as the principle of «confusionism». A «confusionist» believes that the knowable world is incomplete if seen from any one point of view, incoherent if seen from all points of view at once, and empty if seen from «nowhere in particular». Given the choice between incompleteness, incoherence, and emptiness, I opt for incompleteness while staying on the move between different ways of seeing and valuing the world. See: Richard A. Shweder: *Moral Maps, «First World» Conceits, and the New Evangelists*. In: Lawrence E. Harrison, Samuel P. Huntington (eds.): *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. New York 2000, 158–159.

2 Pierre Bourdieu: *The Field of Cultural Production*. Oxford 1993, 168. In yet another work, the French sociologist gives an example of one of those discursive «places», which is the populist exaltation with popular culture; see: Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc J. D. Wacquant: *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago 1992, 60–72.

society³, which leads to yet another difference between those spheres: the social imaginary is an interpretative frame allowing the acknowledgement of people in common practices and legitimising the membership group. The social imaginary thus determines the ways of imagining social existence, ways of undertaking actions with others, the ways relations between ourselves and others look, expectations towards others and the normative assumptions they are founded on. As such, the social imaginary is independent from social theory, though it happens that something, which at the beginning was theory, formulated and publicised by the intellectual elite, infiltrates the social imaginary, becoming later an element of universal consciousness. As an example Charles Taylor cites the moral order ideas of Grotius and Locke or other historical verbalisations of parliamentary democracy and liberalism.⁴ According to a similar principle the concept of nation proliferated, as did nationalist ideologies, the efficiency of which determines eventually how they are transposed into visions of «banal» nationalism or popnationalism.⁵

There is no doubt that the career of the notion of culture is an extremely important element of the contemporary state of the social imaginary on the global scale. By the way – is it a notion or a word? We have now reached the twofold sense, in which this indivisible category functions. Frequently spoken of, embodied as a form of universal consciousness, as a self-defining and self-referential term, culture has a more and more misty character. Clifford Geertz notices that this notion is similarly bad and important, as well as perverse: «The vicissitudes of «culture» (the *mot*, not the *chose* – there is no *chose*), the battles over its meaning, its use, and its explanatory worth, were in fact only beginning».⁶ The thing is that the efforts of anthropology's leading figures, such as Alfred L. Kroeber, Clyde Kluckhohn, Ruth Benedict, Robert Redfield, Ralf Linton, Bronisław Malinowski, Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, Margaret Mead or Claude Lévi-Strauss, not to mention Geertz himself, «made the anthropological idea of culture at once available to, well, the culture, and so diffuse and all-embracing as to seem like an all-seasons explanation for anything human beings might contrive to do, imagine, say, be, or believe».⁷ And the name is of course «culture». Furthermore,

3 Arjun Appadurai claims that similar imaginaries are nowadays, thanks to the influence of electronic media, a global acumen of imagination, cf.: Arjun Appadurai: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis 1997. In the most recent book entitled *Fear of Small Numbers* (Durham and London 2006), the American anthropologist with Indian roots shows that the globalization of consciousness includes the problems of violence and terrorism, thus showing the second, uglier face of shaping the social imaginary under the influence of fundamentalist attitudes.

4 Cf. Charles Taylor: *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham and London 2004, 25–26.

5 Cf. Wojciech J. Burszta, Mariusz Czubaj, Krzysztof Jaskułowski: *Popnacjonalizm*. Warszawa (forthcoming).

6 Clifford Geertz: *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics*. Princeton 2000, 12.

7 Ibid.

since the anthropological idea of culture became «available for the culture itself», and was lost for good to professional anthropology, it began an independent life as a notion, as a key word of the collective social imaginary. Moreover, on the academic ground it was «appropriated» by competing disciplines, which developed in relation to the all-embracing culturalism, namely cultural studies (including aggressive feminism), post-colonial studies and ideology-driven multiculturalism studies (shortened to multi-culti). The primary, real genetic relation between the notion of culture in an anthropological sense and its widened meanings is currently only simulating an apparently linear genetic continuity.⁸ An anthropologists' confusion derives exactly from that, for «their» understanding of culture (however it varies and is contested within the discipline) and the word «culture» in the meta-notional character being used within social discourse regulates two separate concepts. Words are not notions, just as notions are not simply words. Referring to a methodological tradition rarely appealed to today, one could say that in both of those cases the context of discovery and the context of justifying of this notional form is different.⁹

At the turn of the 20th and the 21st century «culture» became an inalienable element of the dictionary of advertising, business and politics and also, more recently, the World Bank and other global organisations, which I will discuss further on. The word culture also seems to explain everything, starting with the issues of political instability in different areas of the world (Haiti, the Balkans, Rwanda, Latin America, China, etc.) and ending with difficulties with finding a job, racial tensions in British schooling and social help for the unemployed in New York City. Culture explains both the «Asian economic miracle» and the collapse of the Japanese economy twenty years later.

Also decision-making about consumption is related today to supporting various «cultures of sleeping»; wearing certain sports shoes is a sign of membership in a precisely, not to say anthropologically, constructed «Nike culture».¹⁰ Reading, watching and listening to voices reaching us from the consumer culture it is really hard to avoid terms like «semiotics of culture» of this or that company or the «incompatibility of culture» of various corporations.¹¹ Indeed, as we can see in the

8 We can observe a similarly apparent genetic linearity in the case of the relation between the notion of culture in anthropological understanding and the notion of popular culture.

9 Those terms were introduced into the methodology of science by Hans Reichenbach.

10 A perfect exegesis of the the philosophical assumptions and the culture of the Nike Corporation can be found in: Robert Goldman, Stephen Papson: *Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*. London 1998.

11 On the theme of the struggle over the senses of the notion of culture see also: Adam Kuper: *Culture: The Anthropologists Account*. Harvard 2000; see also: Marshall Sahlins: Two or Three Things that I Know About Culture. In: *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5, 1999, 399–421.

motto of this article, the world is OUR culture! It is hard to find a better summary of the expansionist tendencies of which we speak here.¹²

The diffusion of the word «culture» we can observe, needs, as I deeply believe, a series of scrupulous ethnographic analyses, however trivial the current history of this sacred – to anthropologists – explanatory variable would be. This outline is intended as a modest first step towards this goal. What is symptomatic is the fact, that the first reaction of the anthropological community to the «theft» of its key notion and a specific identity marker of anthropology as a discipline of knowledge, was a distrust towards the principle of its uses on the scientific ground, including anthropology itself. Culture was stolen and therefore its primary meaning has been profaned in three separate ways: on the academic ground (the way the notion of culture is used in cultural studies gives anthropologists a headache, makes them laugh or cry); by the wide spectrum of the imaginary and the preying on the collective imagination by politicians, ideologues and economists; and on the ground of popular culture within the framework of the metaculture of newness. Surveyors of cultural difference did not want to have anything to do with the common and indeed thoughtless, although socially constructed, «culture fashion», so they have shown an unambiguous collective *désintéressement* with the trends of the unbridled expansion of that word. It is worth mentioning here Johannes Fabian, who was the first to notice how complicated the historical turbulence of the humanities sometimes is. An example of that is anthropology, which has now become an element of the pop-cultural consciousness, which ought to give the scholars a lot to think about and cause them to re-orientate their way of perceiving the world and the status of the notion of culture they have been using so far.¹³

After an episode I would call a «resentment with the world», when social theory (the anthropological conceptualisation of culture as it is) and the internal disputes within the discipline concerning the status of the notion of culture became only an accounting for marginal differences of the uses of the notion of culture in the collective consciousness, the time came for a substantial debate over the causes of that situation and the things that anthropology can do to keep the notion of culture for explanatory goals in the face of the metacultural tendencies that this notion is now subject to. It turns out that anthropology has a lot to say in that matter, although

12 It is worth noticing that this slogan can mean two things (or maybe the two of the at them same time?) – [1] there is no world, which could escape the company, because it dictates the standards of the contemporary culture, or [2] we all live in one culture, and «we» perfectly know about this, proposing a certain form of participating in it – buy our lingerie and you will belong to the culture of the world!

13 Johannes Fabian: *Moments of Freedom: Anthropology and Popular Culture*. Charlottesville–London 1998; on the same topic see also Wojciech J. Burszta: *Różnorodność i tożsamość. Antropologia jako kulturowa refleksyjność*. Poznań 2004.

works from that stream are still only a small part of the scientific production of the connoisseurs of diversity, too use a nice phrase by Richard Rorty.¹⁴ I am not even going to outline here the debates on that topic, which have been and still are taking place on the ground of anthropology, for my aim is different. It proves that anthropological perception through the key, but so cognitively troublesome, notion of culture¹⁵ allows for the interpretation of the metacultural wars taking place in a situation of the well-embedded belief that the state of the world can be explained in cultural terms, whatever they would connote and denote. I propose thus a perspective of an attentive observer, who is not involved in the actions of war in the field of the images of what culture is and what it should be.

Ulf Hannerz, a prominent anthropologist, proposed the analysis of the incredible career of the notion of culture in the metalingual context, as an element of Taylor's social imaginary determining the horizon of thinking about the «issues of that world» in the situation that «culture is everywhere».¹⁶ In his opinion we now have two strong metacultures: a metaculture of similarity (called also a metaculture of modernity) and a metaculture of difference (or multiculturalism). They both have roots in the scientific world, but they are based on separate intellectual traditions, namely the universalistic and the relativist (which took, as it turned out, the form of a specific mode of essentialism).

The basic assumption of the first metaculture comes from a belief that social life should be based on the universal idea of progress and justice and people should become individuals, fully autonomous, rational, attached first of all to the idea of citizenship – not particular cultural traditions, which are usually not fulfilling the standards of the «good life». In other words, the metaculture of modernity encourages the search for and cultivation of not the differences, but the similarities between people, it celebrates competent individuals using rational choice criteria, open to and tolerant of other symbolic systems. A far-famed manifesto of the metaculture of similarity was a collective work edited by Lawrence Harrison and Samuel Huntington named *Culture Matters. How Values Shape Human Progress*, which also included articles by anthropologists distancing themselves from its main argument. According to Harrison, their

14 An important piece from this current is without doubt a group work: Catherine Besteman, Hugh Gusterson (eds.): *Why America's Top Pundits Are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back*. Berkeley 2005; see also Michel-Rolph Trouillot: *Adieu, Culture: A New Duty Arises*. In: Richard G. Fox, Barbara J. King: *Anthropology Beyond Culture*. Oxford–New York 2002.

15 This theme demands of course a separate analysis. I am interested here only in the topic of the anthropological gaze on the «metacultural wars», that we are contemporarily experiencing and which are taking place outside of the territory of anthropology itself.

16 Ulf Hannerz: *When Culture is Everywhere: Reflections on a Favorite Concept*. In: *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. London–New York 1996, 30–43.

protests concerning the ethnocentrism of the metaculture of novelty are not merited, for most inhabitants of our planet would agree with the following statements, which eventually justify both the economic and cultural globalisation of contemporaneity:

- Life is better than death.
- Health is better than sickness.
- Liberty is better than slavery.
- Prosperity is better than poverty.
- Education is better than ignorance.
- Justice is better than injustice.¹⁷

It is obvious for Harrison and Huntington that as a result of the half century old and ongoing communication revolution, the Western understanding of progress became a common good apparently universally desired. The diversity of cultural conventions as separate systems of meaning is without doubt beneficial for the symbolic wealth of the world but only if those conventions are not in contradiction with the idea of progress. Progress in the form of the liberal metaculture of modernity resolves to «longer, healthier, less burdensome, more fulfilling life»¹⁸ and its goal is unambiguously defined as «the affluent consumer society, although an end to poverty is clearly one of the universal goals, and that inevitably means higher levels of consumption».¹⁹ According to that idea of progress, this tendency that developed on ground of Western culture could be now regarded as «virtually universal aspiration».²⁰ People ought to be proud of their own cultures, which should be on the other hand treated a bit like «boutique multiculturalism» or a folklorized culture, for only those versions are not a danger to the idea of progress and the democratisation of access to successful consumption as an ultimate horizon of imagination.

The metaculture of similarity possesses a strong foundation in the form of political organisations (The World Bank, UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, NATO) coming from an assumption that the states existing today, despite all the obvious differences between them which is sometimes even a civilisation gap, have an identical legal status and the official rhetoric of particular governments (including those typically authoritarian) supports modernity and progress, and not simply the cultivation of local traditions. All those societies – which are able to adapt the metaculture of modernity – stand a chance of an economic success. In this form the idea of the evolu-

17 Lawrence E. Harrison: *Why Culture Matters*. In: Harrison, Huntington (eds.) 2000: XXXVI–XXXVII.

18 *Ibid.*, XXVI.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

tion of culture returns today. The «progress» of culture in this new, liberal regime relies upon support for the values of the metaculture of similarity and the marginalization of the influence of concrete «objective» cultures, which seem an obstacle on the way towards universal happiness and prosperity. In the context of a perfect anthropological vivisection of the claims of the metaculture of modernity, Richard Shweder summarises this logic as follows: «The prediction here is that Western-like aspiration will be fired up or freed up by globalisation and will be the cause and the concomitant of economic growth. Western-like aspirations include a desire for liberal democracy, the decentralisation of power, free enterprise, private property, individual rights, gender equality, and so on, and perhaps even a taste for Western products. With regard to «globalisation», «westernization», and «economic growth», this prediction imagines causal effects in all directions. Basically, this the Western «enlightenment» origin story universalised and projected into the future».²¹

There is no actual economic progress or improvement of life quality without a deep cultural penetration by the West – this seems to be the unsaid conclusion of the supporters of the metaculture of similarity. As Richard Rorty said – the liberal culture is good for its goal is to minimise suffering and to maximise good.

Ulf Hannerz calls the second, competitive metaculture of contemporaneity the metaculture of modernity or multiculturalism. It is a distinct counterproposal to the homogeneous rhetoric of the metaculture of modernity. Marshall Sahlins was one of the first scholars to notice a general tendency to call upon one's culture as a main marker of self-consciousness amidst the representatives of the old «anthropological cultures», that Jurij Lotman referred to as «small alphabet» cultures turning into self-referential «big alphabet» cultures. The American anthropologist calls this phenomena the creation of «a world *system* of cultures, a Culture of cultures».²² In a frequently cited passage, Sahlins notices: ««Culture» – the word itself, or some local equivalent – is on everyone's lips. Tibetans and Hawaiians, Ojibway, Kwakiutl and Eskimos, Kazakhs and Mongols, native Australians, Balinese, Kashmiris and New Zealand Maori: all now discover they have a «culture». For centuries they may have hardly noticed it. But today, as the New Guinean said to the anthropologist, «If we didn't have *kastom*, we could be just like white men»».²³

According to Sahlins and other anthropologists (who were also «robbed» by the natives of their property, i.e. culture), this new form of culturalism derives from an

21 Richard Shweder 2000, 169.

22 Marshall Sahlins: Goodbye to *tristes tropes*: ethnography in the context of modern World history. In: *Journal of Modern History* 65, 1993, 19; this article can be also found in Sahlins' collected works volume: Marshall Sahlins: *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays*. New York 2000, 471–500.

23 *Ibid.*, 3–4.

exactly opposite assumption than the one on which the metaculture of modernity/similarity is based. Thanks to the cultivation of images of their own culture, early anthropological native peoples become conscious of their uniqueness and distinctiveness. Defining their own identity in the face of the cultural outside, they understand themselves as representatives of a distinctively defined entity, both in a historical sense and with reference to the present day, including the commercialised tourist industry. An important transformation happening here is that the notion of culture as a universal category becomes nowadays «a place of collective rights to self-determination», a source of values used for political purposes as a foundation for mobilisation. Societies, which were for years described, analysed and interpreted by the visitors from the Western cultural circle, are now referring to those model accounts of their own cultures, modifying and canonising them to force claims for supporting every manifestation of the cultural self-consciousness that can have a categorical explanation. The «tribalisation» of modernity is based in this case on founding one's thinking about culture on the notion of difference. «Culture» as a continuously repeated and remembered intentional matrix of self-consciousness (we do it like that, this or that is unthinkable for us, in our rites we show, our vision of the world is based on, etc.) is now becoming a universal synonym of identity, plainly its autonomic marker. This sort of metacultural consciousness (for identity is a set of norms and directives called upon according to the principle of «citing» from an ready-made repertoire of patterns) is an argument supporting the distinctiveness of social groups. It is additionally a consciousness, that ought to be in effect institutionally legitimised through the acknowledgement (for example by the state) of the existence of identity cultures. Contemporary debates about «identity politics», multiculturalism or rational social policy derive from a fundamental assumption, which has roots in a classical, relativist anthropology: this is the claim that every human group possesses some kind of culture and that the boundaries around those groups and the outlines of those cultures are fairly easy to describe. It is a good and a desired thing to maintain, promote and accept those cultures, acting in this way on behalf of cultural diversity.

The relation between an image of a place and the construction of the cultural identity is a crucial issue in traditional and conventional theories of culture. Culture needs differences, boundaries between people and things. It is not a natural order but an intentionally formed one. In every environment like this we can find present the boundaries bonding some people, but eliminating others or at least telling them which boundaries they are not to cross. It is also a difference between the so-called peer group and a differentiation group. As Zygmunt Bauman and Tim May write, the distinction group is, to be exact, an imaginary opposition necessary for the membership group for its own identity, cohesion, internal solidarity and emotional

security. Thus the readiness to function together within a certain group has to be based on an unwillingness to co-operate with its adversaries. This suggests that for the sense of security we need to fear what is other and different.²⁴

The understanding of culture outlined above derives— as I have already said — directly from the anthropological examinations of small native communities, both «continental» and insular. It is they that seem to suit perfectly the model of the homogeneous community, territorially limited and self-reproducing in an almost identical form. The metaphor of the laboratory sometimes used by the surveyors underlined that when analysing small groups of people one can see things, which are hidden, secret and far more abstract in complex (national) communities. This claim has had a long vitality and even nowadays it happens that anthropologists return melancholically to the images of the world consisting of autonomous entities untouched by the problems of **nodes**, flows and the hybridism of people and ideas of over-territorial character. Indeed, as Hannerz rightly remarks, diversity was formerly «packed» more nicely and elegantly. One was able to mark cultures on the map almost similarly to states on political maps — it was a multicoloured mosaic of territorially situated communities realising distinct norms and cultural directions.

A similar mode of thinking often takes the form of simultaneous reductionism and essentialism.²⁵ From the perspective of the metaculture of modernity it carries three fundamental epistemological assumptions. First of all, it unjustly assumes that cultures are easily distinguishable entities. Second, it assumes that cultures unambiguously overlap with population groups and an uncontroversial description of any group is possible by presenting its territorial reach and/or the content of its mental map (the inventory of culture). The third premise suggests that even if cultures and groups do not directly correspond with each other, even if we have more than one culture in a certain territory or a certain group is not monocultural, it is not an important political or social problem. It is exactly that response to the above mentioned uncertainties that is present in nationalist thinking.

Ideologies and nationalist movements are an extreme form of an attitude aiming at maximising the protection of the purity of culture and eliminating strangeness in order to keep this imaginary entity unchanged, safe and familiar. Ironically, nationalism reverses the participant/observer perspective so it is the supporters and ideologues of nationalist movements that are trying to force unity, consistency and homogeneity onto culture, which is diverse, inconsistent and narratively heteroge-

24 Zygmunt Bauman: Tim May: *Thinking Sociologically*. Oxford 2001, 53.

25 As noticed by Seyla Benhabib, who calls this tendency a «reductionist sociology of culture» (Seyla Benhabib: *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton 2002, 4).

neous. Therefore, they speak from an external perspective although allegedly on behalf of the participants of the indisputably coherent cultural entity. In a significant essay called *DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation* Homi K. Bhabha shows the strategies and paths used by nationalist ideologies. Almost every element of the everyday life has to become a sign of a cohesive national culture. As we read further on: «In the production of *nation as narration*, there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative».²⁶ The «pedagogic temporality» is nothing other than the narrative strategies of writing, creating and the teaching of history, myths and other collective tales, thanks to which the nation can be presented as an existing-in-time and lasting entity. The «recursive strategy of the performative» is the discovery by intellectuals and ideologues, as well as artists and politicians of the strategy of story telling and representation. Thanks to that the «nation» can be continuously reproduced in its «culture». A return to that mode of thinking on an unprecedented scale in contemporary Europe we now observe in Poland under the rule of PiS (Law and Justice party). What else can the presently constructed «political history» be than a renewed «nationalisation» of consciousness? A formula making sure that in the face of a crisis of values, the fragmentation of life and the spectre of globalisation, the life of an individual is not a matter of coincidence and ceaseless risk, is: «I don't know who I am or even if I am, but I belong with my national and religious roots, therefore I follow *them*».²⁷ In an époque in which almost everything has been undermined, a longing for straightforwardness and a legibility of meaning is born. It is an absolutely perfect ground for the development of popnationalism. The nationalist metaculture of difference is ready for war with the metaculture of liberalism throughout almost the whole of Europe, questioning the hitherto communal representations on which the ideas of a Common Europe are founded.

A paradox inseparably connected to the ideology of multiculturalism, which expresses most clearly the metaculture of difference, is the way that otherness is manifested. The metaculture of difference is a typical example of a loaned discourse, starting with the very notion of difference and expressing the perspective of the observer, not the objective culture.

Every analysis of culture, be it empirical or normative, has to be built on the differentiation of the viewpoint of a social observer (external observer) from the viewpoint of a social subject. A social observer – 18th century narrator or chronicler, 19th century linguist or missionary, 20th century anthropologist, contemporary develop-

26 Homi K. Bhabha: *The Location of Culture*. New York 1994, 145–146.

27 Julia Kristeva: *Nations Without Nationalism*. New York 1993, 2.

er or tourist – is always forcing order and coherence onto the stream of experiences in the face of cultures treated as expedient for the observation of individual beings. Every gaze on a culture as a clearly distinguished entity is an external one, a gaze that creates a coherent image of reality in order to understand and control its cultural shape. The participants of culture, on the contrary, experience their own traditions, tales, rituals, symbols, tools and conditions of living thanks to the common, although easily subject to change and disapproval, social narratives. Seen from an internal perspective, culture does not seem an entity, rather as a horizon of expectations receding every time we desire to reach it. In this sense it is a social imaginary which can take a codified form that is an aim of the multiculturalists.

Two reasons have a decisive influence on the fact that culture presents itself through and thanks to explanations of a narrative character. First, social actions and relations are founded on a double hermeneutics: we know what we do thanks to the explanations of what we are doing; words and actions have a similar status in the sense that nearly all significant human actions are referred to as a certain «type of acting» through explanations of a certain agent and others interpreting his/hers actions. It is happening when there is no accordance between an agent and an observer. The second reason for which culture consists of competitive narratives – not only because actions and interactions created thanks to narrative together make up a «narrative network» is the fact that the cultural actions are also taking place in a process of self-judgement of agents. Those judgements make second level narratives and take the form of normative explanations of actions. Essentially, what we are used to calling culture is – one has to underline this again – a sort of horizon created by valorising judgements, which define «good» and «evil», «purity» and «dirt» (in a social sense), the «sacred» and the «profane», they tell us what is «ours» and what is not, etc.

Distinguishing cultures and the groups of people – who are its «carriers» – is a hard and delicate task. Possessing culture means being in its midst, being inculturated in a way that is proper for this and not another group. Therefore the boundaries of culture are being closely guarded, the cultural narratives «clean» ambiguity, and participation in rituals is being reserved for one's own people, not allowing aliens into it. The group identity based on the notion of difference is permanently in danger and can be «polluted» by external influence or even «stolen», for example through borrowing and trivialisation by popular culture. In the light of this, as I believe, what becomes clearer is the essentialising of culture through multiculturalism, treating it as a thing that can be easily lost. The authenticity of identity is also necessarily its «purity» and what is pure is being determined by not being in corrosive contact with otherness, especially when it is a majority culture founded on the metaculture of similarity.