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FOREWORD

This volume is dedicated to the international PhD program “Searching for Identity: Global Challenges, Local Traditions,” organized at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales,” University of Warsaw, in 2013–2018. The eponymous seminar that was at the center of this program was an excellent example of academic cooperation. For six years of its duration, the seminar was a real platform for multidisciplinary academic discussion and thoughtful insight. A logical conclusion to our seminar is the present volume, dedicated to our common research problem. The participants of our seminar pursued very diverse topics and came from diverse academic backgrounds. However, the thing they all had in common was their interests in identity, which was the core element of all our discussions and presentations during the seminar meetings.

The volume considers quite significant methodological issues. It aims at showing identity as a processual concept,

using the example of the researcher as a living personality. It thus corresponds with the general trend in the humanities and social sciences of paying attention to the researcher and the ways his or her personal background and experience influence the generation of knowledge. We are constantly changing and our views on identity are changing, as well. By introducing this topic, we would like to show completing a PhD, or any other research, as a dynamic process with a personal history of success and failure, as well as to demonstrate the impact of the “Searching for Identity” project.

10 While working on the volume, we asked our authors not to hide behind theories and be free in defining the vague term “identity” to show their own personal and academic evolution. We also encouraged contributors to share their experience of searching for the proper methodology, and the difficulties faced by them while working on the thesis or research project.

Despite our openness to various perspectives and formal choices, the task we gave our contributors turned out to be very difficult. Many of them thought that this approach was not “scientific” enough, or were not used to writing in a such a way. While in anthropology it is not uncommon, for historians, literature studies scholars, or sociologists it was, indeed, a new perspective. Every field and every perspective introduced a new aspect, new description of identity and its dynamics. Not everybody ended up going beyond objectivism (which is not necessarily a bad thing); however, for many of the authors, the vantage point we proposed opened up a new outlook on their own work. It helped them to define their position in the

research process, to estimate their possibilities and weaknesses, and gave them more confidence in their work.

The volume consists of fourteen chapters, an introductory word of Professor Robert A. Sucharski, Dean of the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” at the University of Warsaw, and an opening article by Professor Jan Kieniewicz, Head of the International PhD Program “Searching for Identity: Global Challenges, Local Traditions,” organized in 2013–2018 at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales,” University of Warsaw. Ten chapters are the texts by former participants of the PhD program. The remaining four were authored by the guest scholars doing their research within the Global Dialogues Fellowship at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales,” funded with support from Open Society Foundations. While seemingly different, all these texts are united by the theme of searching for identity, of identity types and ways of their exploration, cognition and perception, and of personal experiences and changes on the academic path.

The first block of articles is called “**Insider and Outsider Experiences.**” The article opening this part is Daria Burnasheva’s text, presenting her own way to, and experience of, researching Arctic identity. Having been born in Yakutia (Sakha Republic), she perceives herself as an Indigenous researcher of Arctic identity, and describes all the difficulties related to it. Moreover, Daria Burnasheva shows her own way of researching Arctic identity from abroad and the ways this influenced her work as an Indigenous researcher.

The second text of this part is by Galina Dondukova, who reflects on her status as a researcher of Buryat identity in the

poetry of Bair Dugarov. Through the lens of her own life, Galina Dondukova shows the path of becoming “three scholars in one” during her work on the PhD thesis. The article shows the experience of a researcher being an insider, an outsider, and a person in-between, all at the same time.

Like his colleagues, Ayur Zhanaev also presents his view on the issue of being an insider as well as an outsider during his research. Ayur Zhanaev’s PhD dissertation was devoted to Buryat ideas of the social order. The author shows how being a Buryat himself helped and, conversely, handicapped him in researching his own culture, especially on the level of fieldwork.

12 The second part of the volume is called “**Identity in the Text and in Discourse.**” It is dedicated to researches of identity in different time periods that used various materials which could be seen as texts opening new, broader discourses and contexts. Olha Tkachenko’s article is dedicated to the notion of perceived identity. Having studied Ukrainian identity in the Polish media discourse, she shows what theoretical and methodological grounds are most suitable for research like hers, based on the sociological notion of identity, which she transfers to media studies and analyzes with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Irina Koluzaeva’s chapter demonstrates how identity could be researched, and what kind of identity could be researched, from a historical perspective. Her article is dedicated to people of the borderland referenced in the correspondence of Filon Kmita Czarnobyłski (1530–1587) – Captain of the borderland Castle of Orsha, and the Palatine of Smolensk. Irina Koluzaeva

shows the way historians research identity using only written texts from the given period.

A very interesting approach is to be found in Bato Dondukov's article. He researches Buryat identity but from the perspective of religion, namely Buddhism. In Bato Dondukov's case, the text that is studied is that of virtual reality – the representation of Buddhism on the Internet. The article recounts his experiences and demonstrates the methodological instruments that could be used in research of this kind.

Each text of this volume concerns the aspect of personal identity of the researcher and its changes that eventually take place during the cognition process. Three of them, however, stand out in their particular focus on the issue of personal identity of the scholar during research. We decided to bring those texts together in the third part, called **“From Personal Identity to Identity of a Scholar.”**

Kyunney Takasaeva's article goes deep into the roots of her personal identity while describing her research on Yakut names and surnames. Wojciech Cendrowski presents his reflexion on ethnographic fieldwork and how it changed his own identity. Marzena Maciulewicz's paper explores different aspects and components of academic identity, trying to identify circumstances which may influence significantly the shaping of a young researcher's scientific perspective. The final article by Kamil Wielecki is based on his personal experience of participating (as a student and then coordinator) in three international and interdisciplinary doctoral programs that were operating – or are ongoing – at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales,” University

of Warsaw. He goes beyond a narrowly understood personal view in order to indicate the basic pros and cons of such programs, and formulates several practical solutions that may be implemented in organizing interdisciplinary doctoral studies. The author thus comments on interdisciplinary education in the context of the contemporary labor market and refers to the place of international and interdisciplinary programs in the Polish academic culture.

The four chapters closing this volume form its final part, entitled **“Intercultural Communication as a Component of Academic Change.”** As we mentioned, these articles showcase the academic work of four guest scholars of the Faculty of “Artes Liberales.” Despite representing different fields of studies, the texts all concern particular aspects of identity. Valeria Korablyova writes about post-communist transformations in Poland and the context of Polish-Ukrainian relations. Oleksiy Polunin presents the philosophical aspect of time flow in the human mind. Inna Sukhenko’s article deliberates on the Chernobyl disaster as a factor in the construction of ecological identity. Finally, Natalia Andriichuk discusses terminology in inclusive education and the problems Ukraine has with it.

We hope that the volume presented to the reader will inspire further reflexion on the fascinating subject that is identity and thereby prove a worthy commemoration of the seminar to which it owes its existence.