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FRIENDSHIP IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL FIELDWORK: SOME ETHICAL DOUBTS

From research to friendship

Friendship is a relationship and at the same time a type of emotion, which may take on a permanent character. My intention in this article is to show that it can be, and often is, something else, namely a tool used in anthropological fieldwork. I am going to answer the following questions: 1. whether a certain emotional relationship called „friendship" between researcher and researchee is a necessary cognitive tool in the process of anthropological fieldwork and 2. whether it is possible to reconcile the process of intellectual and empirical discovery of social reality, requiring a considerable detachment, and often treating people as research „objects", with friendship that by default is engaged and cannot be impartial. In the West friendship has taken on a very specific meaning, but in different European languages it has different connotations. For instance the Polish word *przyjaźń* is less vague than the English word „friendship", but it is certainly weaker and includes fewer obligations and duties than love (*miłość*). Always, however, regardless of minor cultural differences, the word conjures up associations with something pleasant or positive; offering someone friendship is a true gift. I want to ask whether this is true also in fieldwork.

Three crucial elements of the concept of friendship should be discussed in reference to anthropological research:

First, absence of benefits is no barrier to friendship. Someone is our friend not because they are resourceful for us, offer us goods or services, or intend to do so, but because we like them and we think well of them. Yet, the following question arises: is disinterested friendship possible in the research process? If so, is it pos-

sible on the part of the fieldworker and/or on the part of the researchee? Second, friendship is a form of rapport generating symmetrical bonds between two people. Yet, we know of unilateral friendships where emotions are not reciprocated. It is in fact difficult to find an emotional relationship, profound and sincere, which is totally symmetrical. Thus we may assume there is always an element of asymmetry in friendship. In the case of the relationship between researcher and researchee this asymmetry appears already at the level of motivations, aims, and expectations. The difference in motivations on both sides are endemic to the fieldwork situation. There is a person who is studying someone else's life, and they want to know something about the other person, their everyday life, environment and so on. The other person is clearly an object of research, regardless how strong the friendship might be. The researchee most often does not feel the need to be investigated. There are rare cases when anthropologists are invited or even hired to study a particular group. Very seldom are anthropologists treated as physicians, psychotherapists, or people to whom patients can come with their problems. Normally studied people do not ask to be examined or expect a diagnosis, let alone to pay for it. Secondly, researchees have little if any knowledge of the aims of fieldwork, especially in the case of (ethically doubtful) incognito participant observation. While it may be true that researchees show an increasing interest in the researcher's goals, researcher and researchee cannot fully share motivations and intentions. This profound discrepancy of goals is more than the asymmetry that is a standard feature of friendship.

Finally, friendship implies also a type of an obligation concerning mutual aid, friendly and engaged personal exchanges. In 2001, for instance, I was persuaded to give help to the daughter of an informant from Mongolia who wanted to enroll at Warsaw University. Two years later I received a letter from an one-time informant living in Amga, Sakha Republic (Yakutia) with the dramatic question: how to find the grave of his grandfather, a Yakut who was a soldier in the Soviet Army, and died on the Polish territory in 1945. I was asked by Roma informants in a small Carpathian village in southern Poland to appeal to the local administration for extra funds for construction of a new house. Sometimes we are asked or silently expected to write a book or an article supporting the material or ethnic demands of researched communities or popularizing the image of their customs, history, values as it is promoted by the group. In these cases, anthropologist is seen as a spokesperson for the community and a defendant of their interests in the face of various institutions.

Is friendship helpful in anthropological research?

First, I will focus on the perspective of the fieldworker. This is necessary for establishing to what extent amicable relations between anthropologist and the researched community are helpful, or necessary in field research.

It is generally agreed that values are involved in the process of gathering data during fieldwork. Moreover, emotions may be treated as crucial part of this process. If Clifford Geertz (2000) is correct in saying that an impartial attitude is neither natural nor easy to maintain, gathering insights into social reality thanks to an emotional engagement should be fully justified. Geertz also argued that characteristically anthropological field research does not allow for the separation of professional and non-professional areas of life but that the two are always intertwined. As a consequence, ethical problems permeate every stage of anthropological research.

Anthropologists themselves are not very different from the objects of their research (Hastrup 1995: 45-60). This has further methodological consequences: when an anthropologist attempts to investigate a topic, they may know it somehow introspectively from their own biographies. For example, when anthropologists intend to understand rituals of other cultures at the same time they participate and retain an understanding of rituals from their own culture. They acquire knowledge through an analysis involving an individual experience of a particular person. Anthropologists cannot collect data in a laboratory. Data collection in anthropology entails a permanent relationship with various others. One cannot use the microscope to find the idea of hostility, obligations, people's understanding of the past and present; there are no intersubjectively controlled tests. Yet, anthropological work is by no means arbitrary. Some anthropologists have a better or worse understanding of their subject matter; there are some excellent and some poor anthropological books. We know that step by step, little by little, and sometimes instantly we understand more and more of the researched community. From time to time we experience discoveries, and we feel an obligation to explain what we see in the field to the outside world.

Many years ago Robert Redfield (1947, 1956) admitted that anthropologists' most important research tool is their own nature. By nature he meant more than biological „equipment"; rather it constitutes a sort of cultural „equipment" of the anthropologist as a member of a particular community, as well as a representative of a particular culture. Without prior experiences, emotions, we cannot count on having insights into experiences, impressions, desires, and emotions of other people. For these reasons interpretative anthropologists – but not only them – questioned scientific strands in the discipline, insisting on the pertinence of evoking positive, accommodating attitudes towards the culture studied and towards its people. Sympathy and empathy are indispensable conditions of effective field research.

If we accept, however, James Clifford's claim about anthropological authority, namely that an interpretative theory of culture is doubtful in our times because we usually doubt intercultural representations (Clifford 1988: 21-54), we run into the question of whether anything like intercultural communication is at all possible. Back in the 1950s, Horace Miner, following Malinowski, argued

that even extremely „exotic" customs gain a meaning if we look at them from the level of intuitive understanding. He wrote that looking from a distance and from above, from our privileged, safe places in a more economically developed country, it is easy to perceive all the brutality and inadequacy of magic. Yet, without its power, „primitive man" could neither confront practical difficulties nor manage to ascend to the „higher levels of civilization" (Miner 1956: 503-507). This seems to be congruent with the idea of placing the observer in the position of the researchee. So, in anthropological fieldwork „proper" emotional attitude of the researcher towards the researchee, entailing a sort of kindness, sympathy, and friendliness, is key. Fieldwork, thus, is a combination of several elements, a mixture of observation, dialogue, hard work and friendship (Clifford 1997).

James Clifford is clear about the fact that emotions are an indispensable element of the cognitive process, though he admits that these should take the form of controlled empathy. However, publicly expressed statements cannot be based exclusively on these emotions. A frustrated author, not delighted with the negative attitudes of the objects of their observation, is likely to be ignored and her work unpublished. It was precisely for this reason that Malinowski's diaries, in which these elements were openly expressed, caused such a scandal (Clifford 1997: 157). For the most part, the history of anthropology is one in which these emotions, or at least their expression, were routinely suppressed. To be scholarly meant to be, effectively, without emotions. Only recently have emotions begun to be perceived as an element of scientific research. Can thus this recognition be extended to those emotions associated with friendship?

Fieldwork entails an interaction with researchees. As a side effect, the fieldworker may trigger changes in the researched society. For example, when asking questions they provoke their subjects to reflect on issues they may have never thought about otherwise. Anthropologists ask questions, are present here and there, sometimes in expected and more often in unexpected ways. They walk around, ask to be brought to important places and events. They make contacts through being sympathetic yet not invasive, they explain why they came and are interested in the group, place and people. Sometimes they talk about their own life, family and their own country, answer questions concerning their private life, and finally they establishes amicable relations and sometimes even friendships with their researchees.

Yet why does the anthropologist attempt to make friendships in the researched society? Why is it important? First, anthropologists are interested in the deeper meanings of particular behaviors, ways of thinking, social and intellectual constructs, values, aspirations and desires. Without a certain dose of benevolence on the part of researchees fieldwork would not be possible, and so the anthropologist needs friendly interlocutors. Without verbal communication with the members of the researched society anthropologists are helpless in interpreting most of the observed objects and behaviors. It is difficult to connect mere external aspects

of human behaviors on the level of physical movements, or the material world to the symbolic life of the group. The more intimate the verbal contact with the studied society, the more trust the researcher establishes with the researched community, the more open the studied community becomes, and the more profound and therefore better the material will emerge from the fieldwork. Thus quite often anthropologists try to be as nice as possible, sometimes even use flattery, and they ensure their hosts about their best intentions, respect, admiration and genuine interest. The researchees are entitled to treat all of this as proof of friendship, even though all of them are elements of well-trained professionalism.

During the early years of our discipline there was little support for personal contacts with researchees. Frank Hamilton Cushing became so close, so immersed within Zuni culture, that his field data was not taken seriously by the discipline of his time; the average anthropologist adopted an observational attitude, similar to that in the natural sciences. Cushing's subjective, emotional description of Zuni culture was not treated as proper scholarly work (Clifford 1988: 21-54). Between 1920 and 1940 anthropology was increasingly based on long-term personal fieldwork: participant observation, contact with individual members of the society studied (Clifford 1988: 21-54). One year in the field living together with informants became the mark of disciplinary belonging. One year is not an arbitrary period. It is a meaningful period of initiation, and at the same time it refers to the cosmic circle, the biological circle, the sequence of the seasons; it has a metaphysical meaning. In many cultures the period of mourning after the death of near relative is just a year; after a full year a widowed individual can remarry. One year without a break is a period that generates serious changes in the researcher himself. Anthropologists coming back home after one year spent outside their own culture becomes a sort of repatriate, a return migrant, a homecomer as described by Alfred Schutz (1964). The alternative concept of fieldwork as a series of periods of fieldwork alternated with time spent at home is treated as something that protects the anthropologist against this sort of transformation. From the perspective of this paper the important question is whether the time spent in constant contact with the researched group influences the possibility of forming friendships with researchees. Moreover, is it necessary to undergo an internal transformation, to be socialized into the culture being studied to such an extent that friendship in its proper meaning occurs?

Anthropologist in the field is, willingly or not, a person having certain features: gender, physical appearance, age, ethnic background, religion, nationality, and individual temperamental traits and character. These social and individual characteristics create relationships between researcher and researchee that include emotional interaction. Every fieldworker experiences a range of emotions during his work, some of which are entirely tolerated while others are not accepted and even condemned. The taboo which refers to sexual intercourse seems to be the strongest, though it may be extrapolated to the entire sphere of strong emotional

ties. Clifford comments on this taboo with irony, writing that field researchers may love but they cannot desire the objects of their interest. Sexual involvement is usually treated as too strong, affecting the process of data collection. While a certain manipulation of distance and proximity is acceptable, too much proximity is treated as likely to distort any descriptive perspective. Sexual relations, in this way, are rather rejected as a source of cultural knowledge, though nobody would question the profound insight into the researched culture that they may afford the researcher. The same applies to undergoing trance during native rituals or using hallucinogenic drugs, though both of these taboos are transgressed in practice (Clifford 1997).

I need to stress here that it was never forbidden to form friendships with researchees, though deep friendship may shorten the distance between two sides and thus threaten impartiality. But only physical sexual intercourse is totally rejected for methodological as well as moral reasons. The researchee becomes in this case simultaneously an object of observation and subject of interaction, whose subjectivity cannot be denied. Clifford questions this taboo, asking why a common bed should be a worse source of anthropological knowledge than a common meal (Clifford 1997).

However, it should be remembered that friendship has important consequences for both sides. It also has its ethical dimension. Introducing an emotional bond between researcher and researchee means intruding into the studied society. Friendship with a researchee may lead to serious, sometimes positive but also sometimes even tragic, consequences for the latter. On the one hand, in certain situations it may furnish an element of social and cultural capital for the researchee. There are cases when contact with a foreigner – especially a foreigner from a more privileged background or country – becomes the source of prestige and social position. On the other hand, in some societies friendship with a foreigner is stigmatizing, can be interpreted as a sort of sin or treachery, a lack of loyalty. It can be thus the cause of ostracism or at least disapproval. This was the case with Roma groups to which I will now turn.

Ficowski and Papusza

The story of friendship between a Polish poet and writer, Jerzy Ficowski, and a Romani woman, Bronisława Wajs (her Romani name was Papusza, meaning „doll"), is an instructive example. Papusza was born in 1909 (or 1910) in Lublin. She met Ficowski in 1949 during the Roma people's traditional summer travels to western Poland. This was the time when the communist regime adopted the policy of making Roma „productive" – they were persuaded or even forced to give up their nomadic lifestyle and assimilate. In 1950 Papusza's family, like many other Roma families, decided (or rather was swayed and cajoled) to embark on

a sedentary life. Ficowski met Papusza when he was 25 and she was 40, still traveling with her family. They met in the western part of Poland, where Ficowski was running away from the secret services (Machowska 2011: 52-53) and was gathering information about war experiences of the Polish Roma. Papusza was presented to him as a Gypsy poet. She stood out from the rest of the Roma because she was literate, she eagerly read books and newspapers and was keen on education. She had no children. To mitigate her sense of loneliness, she adopted an orphan boy. Her husband Dionizy Wajs was convinced that Ficowski was „great man who writes books and may write a book about them" (Machowska 2011: 51). Ficowski and Papusza quickly became friends. She started to call him my „little brother" (*pszałoro*) and openly expressed a strong fondness of him.

When Ficowski discovered her literary talent, he started to admire her sensitive personality. They had long conversations and exchanged many letters. Papusza told her younger „brother" about the details of Roma life, their customs and values. She also taught Ficowski her native language. Because Papusza had having relatively good knowledge of the Polish language, she was a good teacher. Delighted and charmed by her „songs without a tune", her personality and her way of thinking, Ficowski inspired and instigated her to write down her poetic improvisations. This way he transformed her traditional Gypsy oral style into a written form requiring more consistency and compact form without repetitions (Machowska 2011: 36). Then he collected and translated her poems, introduced them to other Polish writers and published them with his own commentaries. One of the established poets who were particularly fond of Papusza's work was Julian Tuwim – at the time one of the authors most revered by the communist authorities. Together with Ficowski, Tuwim succeeded in getting special stipend for Papusza. At first she refused the money but later on she accepted it, being in a financial predicament.

In the 1950s and 1960s Ficowski became (and in a way still remains) Poland's greatest authority on Roma culture. Papusza was a priceless and often indispensable informant for him, who thanks to her was introduced to the Romani – a „secret knowledge" that was inaccessible at the time and not revealed to outsiders. Papusza realized how dangerous this liaison could become for her – especially after her poems were published. She asked Ficowski personally and the Polish Literary Association to withdraw the book, arguing that she would be „skinned alive" by her own people should the poems be published (Ficowski 1986). Yet nobody listened to her. The literary and scholarly world wanted to have a new exotic poet revealing the truth about Romani life and ways of thinking. Moreover, Papusza was useful politically as an example of a „good Gypsy" on her way to assimilation (Ficowski 1965), something that was as much in vogue back then as multiculturalism is today. In spite of his declarations that the poems he translated and published never contained any elements of „Gypsy secrets", especially those pertaining to their moral code, she was later accused by members of her tribe of

transgressing fundamental rules concerning the separation of Roma life from the non-Romani, *gadzio* world (Ficowski 1965).

Ficowski published photos of Papusza and her family members. This too became a source of suspicion for the Roma. They asked literate people to read the article and found out that their customs, unknown by others for some 500 years, became revealed (Machowska 2011: 56). The early 1950s was traumatic time for the nomadic Roma communities – it was the time of the policy of „settlement and productivity". It lead to a rapid and forced assimilation. When Papusza was invited to Warsaw, she was accused by her tribesmen of being traitor who was used by the authorities for persuading Roma to settle permanently. The turn of 1940s and 1950s was also difficult for Ficowski. He stressed later on that his knowledge of Romani dialects was an effect of his earlier interest in the culture and his efforts to master the language much before he met Papusza. He ensured that he tried (in vain) to persuade the elders of the tribe that his knowledge of the core of Gypsy customs did not come from Papusza.

Nonetheless, Papusza suffered physical assaults already in the autumn of 1950, and an attempt was made on her life. She survived but as a result she suffered serious physical injuries and a psychological trauma. Finally Papusza became „ritually contaminated" (*magerdi*) and unanimously excluded from the Roma community by the highest council of elders and the head of the Roma, being accused of revealing secret elements of Roma culture concerning *mageripen* – ritual purity and impurity, oaths, Gypsy taboos and divination (Machowska 2011: 52). She became a nobody, a person who did not belong – neither a Roma nor a Pole. She broke off her contact with Ficowski and the entire *gadzio* society. Forced to remain silent, she also stopped writing her poems. In 1953 and then in 1965 Ficowski published his first books on Roma culture and history, which are still a source of information on Roma traditions and their normative system. The books made its author a famous, popular and highly esteemed person.

The fate of Papusza, unfortunately, was entirely different. Ostracized by her tribe and banned as a disloyal person, transgressing the most important norms of *romanipen*, lonely and sick, she ended her life on January 8, 1987, after a long stay in a secure psychiatric hospital and then cared for by her sister as a seriously ill and old woman in a small town of Inowrocław (Bartosz 2004). Was Ficowski aware of his responsibility for the harm he had done to the Gipsy poet? In 1986, a year before Papusza died, Ficowski wrote: „I was lucky to have met Papusza. I was the one who discovered her. Papusza had the misfortune of knowing me. Because of me, in spite of my good intentions, she suffered a great harm" (Ficowski 1986: 209-210).

Ficowski spoke openly about his non-malevolent „sin" and emphasized deep friendship that had resulted from his wandering with the Wajs family. „Had I not met Papusza, the world would not have learned about a wonderful Gypsy poet, but she would have been happier" (Ficowski 1986: 209-210).

Why friendship? Individual aspects

The attempt to establish friendships with researchees is, from a psychological point of view, entirely understandable. Let us pursue the stages of anthropological fieldwork and the situation when friendship plays a role of a research tool. Making friends is not only important from the professional point of view but also from the point of view of individuals immersed in a foreign and often unintelligible social context, in which they may experience loneliness. Anthropologist intuitively, unconsciously and – if I may use the word – instinctively keep in touch with those who make their life in the field easier. Clifford Geertz described the emotions anthropologists go through during the work in the field – they feel more alienated and not as intellectually aloof as they would like to (Geertz 2000). The period of fieldwork, even if it is shorter than the traditionally required 12 months – is the time of extreme focus, and hard work, when professional skills are required, but at the same time it is a big part of time in researcher's life, when they not cease to be human beings with certain – differing from one person to another – emotional needs and levels of resistance to loneliness (Barley 1983). Anthropologist cannot be professionals for 24 hours a day, though they may try to. They sometimes feel both physically and psychologically „under the weather", physically and mentally exhausted, feel the overwhelming unintelligibility of the surrounding social reality. They wait for new ideas, for informants (who may not react enthusiastically to their inquires), for supplies that do not arrive on time because of weather or other unknown reasons. These difficulties spur them to seek a closer contact with people nearby wherever it seems possible.

This strategy seems to be the more attractive and meaningful, the longer the fieldwork. By the way, we now treat fieldwork much more flexibly than in the times of Bronisław Malinowski, Edward Evans-Pritchard or Meyer Fortes. The changes in understanding the field are serious factors in simultaneous diminishing and increasing the quest for friendship with researchees. The one year of research that was traditionally recognized as indispensable was a true challenge. Now more and more often it is replaced by shorter and repeated field visits, punctuated by reflecting, reading and writing at home. Malinowski spent two years on the Trobriand Islands between 1914-1918. He too took breaks from the field, so he could regain his physical and psychological stamina by immersing himself in a culture that was more familiar to him. He traveled to Australia and visited universities and cities resembling European ones in order to maintain contact with people intellectually and culturally similar to him. Psychologically it is significant that during these months of „gathering new forces" Malinowski embarked on a serious love affair which culminated in marriage. While reading his diary, we have no doubt that intensive affection gave him the strength to overcome feelings of alienation and loneliness. Malinowski had no practical chance to

establish friendships with his informants, the cultural distance between the European anthropologist and the „savage islander" made this sort of relationship impossible. He had no choice, and had to find profound emotional relations outside the field. Today, by contrast, anthropologists are more likely to feel „on an equal footing" with their informants. And by and large, uncertainty and alienation can be treated as a positive stimulating factor.

Such are individual and very personal causes and motives for seeking friendship with researchees. Of course during our fieldwork – the same way as in our own society – we meet people who are nice, polite, interesting, intellectually attractive as well as those whom we estimate as dull, stupid, hostile, malicious and even repulsive. Moreover, there are entire societies and cultures which we find pleasant and attractive as a whole, evoking feeling of mutual understanding and those in which we feel awkward, uneasy, totally unintelligible, evoking feeling of distance and alienation. Evans-Pritchard is a good example, with his difficult experiences in the Nuer society that displayed an unfriendly, sometimes even hostile attitude towards him (Evans-Pritchard 1940).

Anthropologists constantly benefit from assistance of their informants, their time and the practical advice concerning everyday life they give. Without researchees' hospitality fieldwork would be entirely impossible. Researcher, as it was shown in the Trobriand rule of reciprocity, feels obliged to offer a countergift. Often it takes the form of loyalty towards the society, or its particular members. This loyalty has always been associated with our discipline and is – in my view – the moral basis of anthropology at large.

Initially interest in distant cultures was associated with developmental and colonial engagement with the non-European world, sometimes including humanitarian as well as educational activities, such as Christianization, with the self-proclaimed aim of „bringing civilization" to the „natives" or „savages". Today anthropologists are less self-confident, and often question their ability to change other people's lives. They are more cautious in making grand statement about what is good for other cultures. Anthropologists are in contact with people who often live in dire straits and who may expect that scholars presence or intervention may improve their living standards. Yet, Geertz (1984) sounds bitter and pessimistic when writing of the helplessness of anthropologists in their attempts to be loyal towards his researchees. They share few interests with their informants and have almost no possibility of influencing their lives. This is also why, Geertz argued, anthropologists cannot count on the researched community for help and understanding.

Geertz (2000) is correct in saying that at the majority of research in contemporary social sciences requires a certain degree of humanistic sensitivity. When anthropologists do not want to apply the method of giving to their informants colorful beads, we must offer ourselves – our friendship. It means in practice that the research relation becomes really personal and individualized. We have only one choice – to become friends with our informants (Geertz 1984). Anthropolo-

gists too are often welcome with „beads" of a kind. This pertains to stories „prepared" for the stranger. An old Koriak shaman, even before being asked to tell or show something, will take out his old shaman paraphernalia from the closet, and tell shaman stories because he has already been taught by Russian ethnographers what anthropologists are likely to be interested in. The Roma know that the *gadzio* like Gypsy music and dancing, so they always present these elements of their life, which often differ strongly from Roma music and dance practiced inside the society. At any rate they carefully hide their intrinsic social traits such as ideas about ritual purity, contamination, the caste-like social structure and the generally orally transmitted moral code.

The researcher, through even superficial manifestations of friendship or rather friendliness, may believe that he has received everything he wanted to. The translation of friendship into specific goods or services may be very simple: giving money, a bag of sweets for children, toys and books in the Romani house. In fact, researchees increasingly expect that these acts of friendship result in something more, such as the representation of Roma community interests in contacts with local or even national government or an improvement of their image in the media. In this way the anthropologist becomes the mouthpiece of the researched group (Clifford 1997: 52-91).

The problem signaled by Geertz (2000) arises not only when we are engaged in the study of the Global South. Even when we work in Europe, with the group which is not far from our own values and culture, the discrepancy between the interests of the researcher and informants or potential informants is organically profound. If a non-Lutheran anthropologist is researching the Lutheran community in his own town in Poland, a community with a high rate of university education, then in spite of multiple common traits and cultural and historical roots, there is still an irreducible difference of interests (Nowicka 1993).

When I approached Lutheran priests and community members, they were not forthcoming; I had to make the effort of making various contacts. One thing they did expect from me, however, was a book that would counter popular misconceptions about Lutherans in Poland, and that would demonstrate their Polish roots and value system. Here the figurative beads changed into a particular image of the studied group popularized with the use of the professional skills of the anthropologist and at the same time a „commodity" which was used in a sort of an anthropological barter. This is another way in which friendship may arise as the result of the efforts on the part of fieldworker.

Conclusion

Our discipline has undergone a serious transformation during the last decades. Even if we do not accept postmodern arguments, we must admit that postmo-

dern writers are the midwifes of a turn in anthropological consciousness: methodological, epistemological and ethical. Any self-satisfaction or certainty regarding the moral meaning of doing anthropology have now been shattered. More and more both researcher and researchee are working in the same institutions or at least meet there (Fatyga 1999). For instance, I regularly meet Roma leaders, with whom I worked as an anthropologist in the field, in the Ministry of the Interior. We attend the same meetings. There are different relations with them than those that Boas or Malinowski had with the objects of their fieldwork. The ministerial hall with the round table is also a field for me, but I am not the only observer; my Roma colleagues and at the same time researchees are observing me too (Fatyga 1999).

The same applies to the Autonomous Koriak Unit in Kamczatka, where I have contact with local intellectuals. Moreover, I have a sense of sharing a common intellectual ground when I talk with a „simple hunter" in northern Yakutia (Sakcha Republic) in Siberia, when he discusses with me the latest statistics concerning support among Polish citizens for the European Union. Our informants become sometimes our friends and our guides to their culture. We find that we have common favorite books, common life experiences, common problems out of which sometimes differences of, say, attitude to death, spiritual life, religion may appear as differing, not easily understandable and exotic. We may have, however, exactly the same type of university training. Intellectual, social and cultural distance between researcher and researchee is today shorter than it was half a century ago. The researchee becomes more and more our partner in the social, political, intellectual, and „last but not least" emotional senses.

I agree with Geertz (2000) that intercultural friendship is possible and valuable for anthropology. For the informant the benefits of anthropological research can be of various kinds: a feeling of being part of an important project, pride in one's own culture and a competent knowledge of it, a chance to express private opinions in the presence of a neutral outsider, to say nothing of direct and indirect material benefits (Geertz 2000). Nevertheless, friendship between them is distorted by the difference of interest and cultural perspective. Yet, friendship, as I defined it earlier, should be a sort of relationship based on lack of benefits. According to Geertz, friendship is terminated when the informant's starts feeling cheated. I would suggest that often the researcher may feel cheated, though for them it should be a professional risk they should be prepared for.

In the time of Boas and Malinowski's fieldwork, the researcher controlled totally the research situation. Today the situation is quite different. Results of anthropological research are no longer shared only with fellow scholars at international conferences – nowadays local intellectuals from the researched groups have access to it too. Sometimes local groups use work published by anthropologists to further their own particular interests, and struggle to better their lives. Sometimes local leaders, treated as friends by anthropologists, protest against the publication of certain data or statements. They may attempt to befriend anthro-

pologists in order to „recruit" them as their „ethnic experts". Sometimes they propose concrete material rewards for such a cooperation, but more often limit the access to their customs. In this way researcher becomes a tool in the hands of the researchees, rather than vice versa. Anthropology becomes a servant no longer of colonial authorities or other external forces but of the ethnic community and its leaders. We must remember, however, that anthropology has never been an ethically and politically neutral discipline – it has always been used by somebody – and that the situation has changed only in the sense that at present, the ones who want to make use of it are the members of researched societies.

Key words: friendship, fieldwork, ethical sensitivity

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FRIENDSHIP IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL FIELDWORK: SOME ETHICAL DOUBTS

(Summary)

Friendship is a relationship and at the same time a sort of feeling, which may take on a permanent character. This article shows that it can be and often is something else, namely a tool in anthropological fieldwork. The author tries to answer the following questions: 1. whether a certain emotional relationship called „friendship" between researcher and researchee is necessary as a cognitive tool in the process of anthropological fieldwork, 2. whether it is possible to reconcile the procedure of intellectual and empirical insight into social reality – which requires considerable distance, impartiality, the descriptive „objectivist" attitude that sees the researched reality, including the researched people, as objects – with friendship which is engaged and not at all impartial, and 3. whether friendship between researcher and researchee is morally neutral. I discuss the story of the friendship between a poet and writer, the first specialist in Roma culture in Poland and an excellent fieldworker, Jerzy Ficowski, and a Gypsy (Polska Roma) woman, Bronisława Wajss (Romani name: Papusza), as an instructive example. The fate of Papusza, unfortunately, was tragic. Ostracized by her tribe and banned as a disloyal person, transgressing the most important norms of *romanipen*, lonely and sick, she ended her life. Her case demonstrates the way in which ethical sensitivity in research is a hard exigency.

Key words: friendship, fieldwork, ethical sensitivity