These are the pages from my book, Languages and Silence in the German-Polish Borderland, on which my talk will be based. Apologies – they are from the pre-final proofs, so there are few marginal corrections. –Elizabeth Vann

postwar generation of autochthonous Opole Silesians, by and large, do not speak German. Why, then, would local German Minority clubs have sought this particular kind of support, since it requires them to twist the nature of their claim to German identity?

The reason that the League of Expellees played a special role in supporting autochthonous Opole Silesian villages is that they got in first. They had already positioned themselves to play a special role before the fall of Communism. While the changes of 1989 precipitated a wave of interest by various organizations and municipalities, it took some time for these contacts to develop. In contrast,the League of Expellees had always had an irredentist interest in the territories "under Polish administration," and this interest had already led them to develop contacts with local village political elites (which, in Communist Poland, necessarily meant members of the Communist Party), before 1989. Thus it was the League of Expellees who actively supported the initial organization of the Social and Cultural Society of the German Minority.

It seems likely that part of that support consisted in suggesting that the German Minority adopt its organizational structure. Their political interest in Silesia was that the remaining autochthonous population made Silesia an exemplar of their slogan, "Silesia remains German." The leadership stuck to the "borders of 1937" definition because it was not in the political interest of either the League of Expellees umbrella organization or the Silesian German Minority to apply the "quasi-biological definition." But it was ideologically inconsistent not to do so, and their membership was not consulted. After Communism fell, it became possible for members of League of Expellee clubs, as well as German journalists, to visit Silesia and check things out for themselves. It then fell to the leadership and members of local German Minority clubs to manage their visitors' impressions.

Start here.

Recall that in my first conversation with the priest in Dobra, he made a great point of blaming the postwar generation's inability to speak German on the lack of opportunity for learning German in schools in Silesia. It was a point consistently made to outsiders. It was usually also pointed out that Silesians were fined and imprisoned for speaking German in the Stalinist years that immediately followed World War II. The image that the German Minority was projecting in the early and mid-1990s was that Opole Silesia had been a monolingual German-speaking society until 1945, when the German language was immediately, severely, and entirely effectively suppressed, at which point, save for the memories of older speakers, it became a Polish-speaking society. The Silesian dialect, together with the ethnohistorical fact that autochthonous Opole Silesians descend from Slavic peoples, is hidden from view. When I

asked, and when I observed other outsiders asking about the Silesian dialect, people implied that Silesian is a German dialect. Communicating these partial truths could be a delicate task.

I never heard anyone admit that the leadership of the German Minority had given its membership actual instruction as to how to handle outsiders who ask awkward questions about language, but when I was perceived as an outsider, the uniformity of my handling had the whiff of a "party line." The first German Minority member I met (the man the priest, as he had promised, introduced me to) stated:

> People settled here from Germany . . . and that's why we have real German names here. But as in all borderlands, the people spoke bilingually. . . . For example in Alsace-Lorraine, . . . the people also have their own dialect. And therefore our language . . . is not real Polish. Nobody could really speak Polish here. . . . [I]t's its own dialect, . . . exactly like in Germany, the Bavarians also have their dialect, right? (Notes, October 19, 1992).

Without lying, he encouraged me to think of Silesian as a German dialect. Had I been so inclined, his comments would have enabled me to believe, or continue to believe, that this was a German-speaking area, and that everyone learned Polish after the war from the Poles who moved in.

This kind of response was not confined to Dobra. When I asked questions about Silesian of the chair of the German Friendship Circle in a village that I call Rybna, he claimed not to know what I meant by the term. In Opole Silesia, he told me, German had been spoken until 1945, and then, perforce, Polish had begun to be spoken (September 25, 1995). And the chair of the German Friendship Circle in another village, that I call Grabina (Julia Kunisch, who figures also in chapters 4 and 9), showed me a recently published dictionary called *SO SPRICHT MAN IN O/S* (How they speak in Upper Silesia) (May 1, 1995). She'd gotten it from the German Minority; it had been privately published in Germany. The introduction read in part:

> In [this] brochure the vocabulary of our Upper Silesian homeland [HEIMAT] is presented. . . . This work should provide proof that the Upper Silesian house dialect has very little to do with the Polish language. The assertion of the Poles, that our homeland is an originally Polish land, is thereby disproved. The strong Polonization of the last decades has not succeeded in destroying Upper Silesian linguistic elements.

There are strategic spaces of veracity and untruth between the statements, "Silesian is not Polish," which is true enough, and "Silesian has very little to

do with Polish," which is linguistically unacceptable, and then the next extreme, which I never heard actually stated, "Silesian is a dialect of German." That is an outright lie. To my knowledge, it was only ever propagated during the Nazi era: "W. Mak 'proved' in 1933 ([published in] "DER OBERSCHLESIER," Opole) that the Silesian dialect is completely separate, having nothing to do with Polonica, being connected rather to the German dialects" (Rospond 1959: 340).

As I said, the game that I observed was obfuscation rather than misrepresentation. The patronage relationships in play—the money—made the stakes high. It was, on occasion, a suspenseful game.

Identity Politics in the Village of Ostrów

The most acute such encounter that I observed occurred at the 700th year anniversary celebrations of a village I call Ostrów (May 29, 1993). The German Friendship Circle, which controlled the village council, had established a patronage relationship with a local club affiliated with the League of Expellees, quite early after the fall of Communism, in 1990. In the process, the chairman of the village council had told this League of Expellees group that "80% of Ostrów is German." This is undeniably true in the legal terms of the German constitution, in which, remember, all individuals who were themselves born, or whose parents or grandparents were born, within the 1937 borders of the German state are defined as Germans and entitled to German citizenship. However, the chairman of the village council must have known that people whose native language was a Polish dialect would not be accepted as truly German by members of the League of Expellees. Managing this discrepancy became difficult when this village chairman invited members of this group to come to the celebrations.

Their bus trundled up just after the morning event, the dedication of a monument stone memorializing the hollow in the woods where the priest and villagers had hidden from the invading Swedes during the Thirty Years War, called the "priest-hole." I had been invited by a historian I knew from the Silesian Institute, a man in his sixties, a native of the village. He had been asked to give a lecture that afternoon. His father had fought on the Polish side in the Silesian Uprisings that followed the First World War and an uncle was later killed in Auschwitz as a Polish nationalist. He is among the few autochthonous Opole Silesians who definitively identify as Poles; he accepts the nationalist ideology of native language and culture indicating nationality, and the logical conclusion is that by this measure, Silesians are Poles (although he understands

the historical complexities which have led some to reach different conclusions). Also present was another native of the village, also in his sixties, a much less highly educated man who, unlike the professor, still lives there and is very grounded in local life. He, it emerged, spoke about issues of identity much as the German Minority members quoted above do.

From the bus emerged a group of German men and women, mostly in their fifties or older, and a group of girls dressed in the traditional costume of *western* Silesia (Lower Silesia)—that is, of the Silesia that had been monolingually German-speaking—the Silesia that founders of the League of Expellees were expelled from. They explained that they had been specially invited. The girls were going to dance that afternoon. They wanted to know what was going on, and, told that a memorial had just been dedicated, they wanted to see it. The professor and the local man offered to show them the monument stone. As autochthonous Opole Silesians educated before 1945, they were able to converse fluently with the monolingual Germans. When we reached it, one of the men in the group looked at the inscription, and asked belligerently, "Why is this written only in Polish? They spoke only German here!"

With that statement, the monument stone, dedicated to Ostrovians forced to hide from political struggles long past, suddenly became a focal point for a political struggle actively playing itself out in the present. Implicitly, the forty-minute conversation that followed was an interrogation of whether the village was really as German as the guests had been led to believe. Were Ostrovians legitimate participants in the national community that the Germans represented? The issue was particularly acute in that their participation was as worthy recipients of financial support—support that these particular Germans, as one of them made clear to me that afternoon, intended for fellow Germans only ("It's right to help them out. After all, they are Germans like us.") During this free-for-all of a discussion, the professor tried to present the historical facts of language use in this region of Silesia, the local man tried to keep the visitors from concluding that these facts mean that autochthonous Opole Silesians are not really Germans, and the visitors tried to sort it all out, while one of them repeatedly paraphrased a fundamental question: "I don't understand how it can be that the villagers here could be Germans when Germans were expelled after the war, and it was Poles who were allowed to remain."

Given the essentialist link between native language and national identity, what hope was there for the man from Ostrów, who has a pressing interest in presenting the village as German? Short of flatly contradicting the professor, that is, lying outright, what could the local man do? Well, he manipulated the terms of nationalist linguistic ideology. Although "native language" is impor-

tant, language has another role in nationalist ideology, and the local man emphasizes that in one aspect, the village conforms to expectations, while diverting attention from the problematic issue of "native language." Let us consider the beginning of the conversation.[1]

> MAN FROM LEAGUE OF EXPELLEES GROUP: Why is there only Polish here? They only spoke German here.
>
> PROFESSOR: I can't really completely support that. In the, um, POPULATION LIST, that is, at the end of the nineteenth century there were still, that is, in the school there were eleven pupils who came from German families, and, then, there were over a hundred and eighty from Polish families. Yes, so it was . . .
>
> M, LE: But that was when they had immigrated, when the Prussians had let them in, but not before that.
>
> P: No, before that there were, ah, Slavic inhabitants, that is, the place names and everything is, is, Polish, so one didn't say a, ah, a, a "Priesterloch" [priest-hole] or something like that, one said, until today one says "KSIĘŻAdól" or "*FARLE*dól" [where "Farle" is a German loan blended with Slavic "dól"], so the whole region it was Polish and also the, ah, name "Ostrów" and not "Astrau," "Astrau" doesn't occur until the eighteenth century, that is in the archives.
>
> M, LE: Yeah?
>
> LOCAL MAN: But that's looking back on it. One can't, because we don't exactly know either, so . . . but anyway, the name, well, there was a German priest here, right? [He reads the name of the priest who hid his congregation in the "priest-hole" from the stone's inscription.]
>
> P: Yes, but the priest came from Berlin. He had been here for three . . .
>
> LM: A person can argue about whether only, whether only Polish was spoken, back then, right? It's hard to tell [this sentence exhibited Polish syntactic interference]. At any rate there were here, this and that kind of people were here, right?
>
> M, LE: Well, yeah, but . . .

The local man's strategy here is historical equivocation. He softens any fact that the historian presents by asserting that the truth is unknown, which, if true, would allow the visitors to believe whatever they want. Yet this is not his only strategy. As the conversation progresses, he plays on the complexity of nationalist linguistic ideology.

Nationalist ideology makes a two-fold demand of language. This correlates with the German constitutional definition of citizenship rights, which also has two strands. Recall that according to the German constitution, there are two categories of eastern Europeans who may be granted citizenship. Au-

tochthonous Opole Silesians fall into one category: descendants of citizens of Germany in its 1937 borders. When the League of Expellees cites autochthonous Opole Silesians as privileged examples of "Silesia remains German," they are either ignoring/ignorant of the linguistic facts or alluding to this aspect of the definition of "German." On the other hand, Upper Silesians, as well as other inhabitants of Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, and other eastern European countries where German-speakers settled over the centuries, may or may not have rights to citizenship depending on whether they can demonstrate, not only descent, but also an active commitment to their German heritage in the form of continued use of the German language and maintenance of German cultural practices.

These two categorizations reflect different strands of European definitions of citizenship. The first is civil, based on an assumption of common political identity, more or less independent of ancestry, language, or culture (the question of "more" vs. "less" seems always problematic). This is the model of citizenship that was found in the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian and Prussian empires that collapsed at the end of the First World War, and is still found in the United States and Canada, in the Netherlands, and in the secular French state. The second is racial, with culture and language as important expressions of ancestry. This is the model of citizenship exemplified by Israel, which, like Germany, has a "right of return" based on ancestry—and also found in the right-wing politics of the nations mentioned above. The German constitution recognizes both strands.

The civil definition of citizenship also makes demands on language to allow one to participate fully in the national community. The imagination of the modern national community, as Benedict Anderson has pointed out, depends on a "national print language" which allows all members of a nation to read and listen to a national media. In this sense of having the ability to participate, by virtue of their fluency in the national language, the older generation of autochthonous Opole Silesians are fully German. The local man points this out repeatedly.

Ancestry, conceived racially, does not come into this definition. The inner, psychological sense of identity, however, does. Civic participation has its own emotional valence. Deep associations with a language do not have to come from one's earliest childhood, from one's mother, as the phrase "mother tongue" may imply. A man of this generation describes this particularly well, explaining that he and his wife are "of German heritage." Having learned German culture in school, he said, he can't be easily reoriented toward Polish culture. For example, what is the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz to him? The

German poet Friedrich Schiller is closer to his heart; he feels familiar with Schiller's poetry, which he read as a schoolboy; he has a relationship with it. His wife added that it's different—legitimately different—for younger people, whose schooling was Polish. "Heritage," the artistic culture of literature and music, is important, and the "heritage" of prewar Silesians is that of German national culture.

Anderson's point, then, allows us to understand the two-fold demand of nationalist ideology on language. The language people use should be a psychological link to, and pragmatic index of, commonality with the nation's past, and also allow full participation in the nation's present. For individuals, then, the linguistic identity which most straightforwardly establishes a claim to national identity is that exemplified by the German visitors to Ostrów: monolinguals in the state language. A native speaker of the state language has the hearth-and-home link to the historic development of the nation and the ability to participate fully in the civic life of the nation—not to mention being able to read Schiller.

No other linguistic identity is quite as good. Domestic speakers of a dialect of a national language have the link to historicity, because the nation is held to have grown out of its own past "folk culture," and the standard language, out of its once fragmented dialects. But dialect speakers will have to acquire the standard language in order to participate, or risk being stigmatized, tellingly, as "backward"—as if they had somehow stepped straight out of the fourteenth century, before German became standardized. Immigrants fare even worse, since their language serves neither historicity nor participation: the national language must be acquired, and maintaining the immigrant language underlines foreignness. German-identified Opole Silesians have a specifically borderland form of the problem: they are domestic speakers of a dialect of the wrong language.

This is the reality that the local man needed to silence.

The Germans in the woods near Ostrów that morning were not interested in civic definitions of national identity. Their comments clearly revealed that they believed that one person can have only one, unambiguous national identity and that language is its outward manifestation. We can see this in their repeated questioning throughout the day: "How many inhabitants does this village have, and how many of them are Germans?" Before the start of the ceremony to dedicate the monument stone, I recorded a conversation to this effect between a German free-lance journalist and an Ostrovian, and this conversation also emerged at the end of the argument. Furthermore, it was posed later in the day in such a way as to foreground it extremely: at the formal cer-

emonies, those at which the professor gave his lecture and at which the German girls performed their folk dances, and at which various awards were bestowed. One of the high officials of the central administration of the German Minority called this question out to the village council during a question-and-answer session. That he posed it in German, while the language of the proceedings was Polish, reveals the intended audience: this answer was expected to be meaningful to the visitors. Yet in a society in which individuals do not necessarily identify with only one nation-state, or with any nation-state, a simple, numerical answer cannot be exactly "true."

The ideology of the German visitors was also revealed by their comments during the argument at the monument stone. One man said, "I would disagree [with the inscription being only in Polish] because we've got to do here with the German people, and not the Polish people, right? The Thirty Years' War was a war with the Germans, and not with the Poles. And they've got that turned around here." Yet the Thirty Years' War was not simply a war with the German people in the sense of modern nation-state warfare. Ostrów was in Austria at the time. And the Austrian state was multi-ethnic.

Another thrust of the conversation underlines that the League of Expellees group viewed language, especially in public, written-literally-in-stone use, as a primary symbol of identity. They spent some time discussing why a predominantly German village would have allowed such a monument to be inscribed only in Polish. Their conclusion was one often offered by the German Minority: that the Polish authorities must not have allowed it. But most autochthonous Opole Silesians see written Polish as a common language, a lingua franca, that is appropriate for public use and does not symbolize identity.

All three of these assumptions reflect the image of a culturally and linguistically monolithic nation-state which can only accommodate two possibilities of individual national identity: either one is a member of the nation-state nationality, or one is a member of a national minority. Such membership is established on the basis of native language and cultural practice. Neither historical assimilation or "civilization," so important to the French model of nationality, nor "multi-culturalism," that important if problematic feature of the American model, counts.

The local man, then, is faced with the task of obfuscating the reality of his village's history in face of the professor's attempts to clarify. As I said, one of his strategies is historical equivocation. Yet this is not his only strategy. Immediately following the exchange quoted in full above, the local man brings out the German Minority linguistic trump card:

MAN FROM THE LEAGUE OF EXPELLEES: Well, yeah, but . . .

LOCAL MAN: We didn't know the Polish language at all. It was a Silesian laguage, right? It was . . .

M, LE: A dialect, right?

WOMAN FROM LEAGUE OF EXPELLEES GROUP: Water Polish, Water Polish, yes? [WASSERPOLNISCH is a derogatory name for Silesian Polish. The term "water" was also prefixed to the names of other languages spoken within Germany.]

LM: Water Polish, yes? One speaks it, there are a lot of expressions. . . .

2ND MAN FROM LEAGUE OF EXPELLEES GROUP: A mixture of German and Polish. LM (overlapping): German expressions are, and then these other . . . not like the Polish. We didn't know the Polish language at all.

M, LE: No.

LM: When the Russians arrived, we had to look in books first, what it was in Polish. We knew the Silesian language, right? But not the Polish. And that's connected to it, one can't tell, today, how it really was. At any rate, the people were here, then, Germans and there were also, that is, Polish, the people here are that too, right?

The point is clear: Silesian is not Polish. We did not speak Polish. Therefore, because language is a primary index of national identity, we cannot be considered Poles. On the other hand, we did speak German. Therefore, surely, we can be considered German. The local man is echoing a sentiment I heard often from older autochthonous Opole Silesians, who don't consider that an unwritten language with no literature really counts as a language. Remember the man who shared his feelings about Schiller: "Our *language* was German." And if that means something different to us than to our visitors, well . . .

Also, it is perfectly true that in the immediate aftermath of the war, Silesians were often forced to use dictionaries to express themselves comprehensibly to Poles. Even if the first word to come to a speaker's mind was Silesian, since Silesian is not a written language, the speaker would have to think of the German translation before looking it up. The only dictionaries were German-Polish ones.

In the following excerpt, the Local Man finds some sympathy from one of the German women, who echoes his point, although her doing so gives the Professor the opportunity to counter it. Yet, as mentioned, most of the League of Expellee group seem quite determined to continue to believe that Opole Silesians are German, and yet another woman helps out again by coming down firmly on the side of the value and nobility of the literary language. Here is the exchange:

WOMAN FROM THE LEAGUE OF EXPELLEES: And that's the case, and this German, um, Polish can't have been the Cong-, how do we say, the Congress Kingdom Polish, as they have it now, as they speak it now, they must have also had this other, as we say, well, we say "Water Polish." [The woman has sensitively repeated the Local Man's argument; she also seems to be sensitive to the fact that "Water Polish" is a derogatory term.]

OTHERS: Water Polish, yes, Water Polish

PROFESSOR: Well, but, but . . . (others continue to mull over this term, Water Polish)

W, LE: And that is a, Water Polish is a dialect.

new line here; place Another Woman from the League of Expellees in small caps at the left.

P: Is a dialect, but there's a dialect also among Cracovians or in Zakopane or, for example, in other regions, the people did not speak literary Polish or German . . . Another woman from the League of Expellees: No, we also have this dialect.

P: . . . but rather their dialect.

M, LE: It's the same in German! In Bavaria we have . . . (he is drowned out)

P: But here it was . . . the German language as official language, and the school language and at work, so one didn't, let's say, develop a German dialect like in Lower Silesia. It was the literary, it was the German language of the stage, that is, our people spoke High German.

W, LE: Yes, yes, yes.

P: At home they spoke Polish, in dialect form, and, and when they got into jobs, in school they spoke High German such that you could understand it all over Germany, and not like in Bavaria or wherever.

M, W, LE: Yes, yes.

P: There, you see! [This is the longest speech the Professor has been allowed to make.]

OTHER W, LE: Yes, that's right. The Upper Silesian, we always said, speaks a pure, High German.

P: Yes, but that was because it came from school! (laughs)

It is true: eastern Silesians, whether autochthonous Opole Silesians or Upper Silesians,[2] spoke standard German. Their ability to participate linguistically in the national community cannot be questioned. All that can be questioned is their historical link to a racially conceived nation where standard German, it is held, grew out of German dialects. Autochthonous Opole Silesians who identify as German manage to present themselves, and their communities, as German by emphasizing the "participation in a national community" aspect, and obfuscating the "authentic link with the history of the nation" aspect.

But that is not the only ace in their hand. It's true that the German visitors are privileged in many ways. In terms of identity, they are monolingual German speakers and life-long residents of the territory of the German state, even if some

of them were militarily expropriated and forced to move in order to stay within it. They also have more money, generally speaking, which puts them in a strong position in practical politics (what Germans call "REALPOLITIK"). In the final analysis, the most important ability of Opole Silesians to "finesse the situation" may not lie in the obfuscating emphasis on standard, literary language. During formal, indoor proceedings, the professor got his chance to give the historical lecture which had so often been interrupted in the woods that morning. He traced the village's original settlement by Slavs, the development of bilingualism, and concluded by saying, "It is thus evident that this is a Polish village."

The League of Expellees group were all present in the lecture hall, seated in a row. Seated in a row also were various officials of the German Minority: the council chairman who had invited the Germans was there, and the official who had asked how many Germans lived in Ostrów was too. They heard this concluding remark with utterly impassive expressions. But, then, why should these bilinguals worry about this view being presented? This part of the celebrations was under official auspices of Ostrów, a unit of the Polish state. The professor gave his lecture in Polish, and none of the Germans understood it.

It is a great aid to this strategic self-presentation that the distinction between Silesian and Polish is inaccessible to Germans. If you don't know Polish, you cannot hear the difference between Polish and Silesian, and then you can believe that the only Polish spoken in Silesia is imported from east of the old German border. You don't even have to grapple with the existence of "Water Polish." On the other hand, when the "party line" is not given in German, it can betray itself. For example, consider one interview in which I and the interviewee each spoke our own Polish, and the interviewee (predictably) asserted that before the war, "practically only German was spoken. . . . After the front came through, they told us that those who had been going to school had to keep going to school. We didn't speak Polish here, practically not at all. People say Polish was spoken here; that's not true, it's nonsense."

I asked, "How did you learn Polish then, after the war?"

The woman replied, "Z koležank*oma*!" (With friends!)

OK. That inflectional ending, *-oma*, is contrastively Silesian. In standard Polish, it would have to be -AMI. So let's assume that it's true that this woman spoke only German before 1945, that it was the language of her family as it was, at the time, the language of public life. If that were true of every family, then the only "friends" with whom she could have learned Polish would have been Polish friends who had moved in from the east. Friends who say "z koležankAMI." But that's not how she learned to speak. Her speech betrays the fact that she learned "Polish" from autochthonous Opole Silesians.

What we see in this German Minority "party line" is strategic management of how important outsiders see the community, in a situation where outsiders often have purse-string importance for the community. As a hint that such factors are in play, consider that after seventeen months of fieldwork, I had a very different conversation with the man who had compared Silesian to Bavarian for me, back on that second visit to the priest's house. He told me that the neighboring village of Nowa Studnia, which I knew had been founded under Frederick II's settlement policies, with the name Neubrunnen, had been settled by Slavic Silesians; the first, German, settlers had quickly abandoned the sandy soil. I expressed surprise; I hadn't realized that. "Oh, come on," he scolded. "You should have been able to figure that out from the surnames there! 'Skowron,' 'Krawiec,' 'Stanik,'—these are Slavic names!!" (Notes, June 27, 1995). The man who had once seemed to want the outsider to believe that Silesian is a German dialect was now reprimanding the linguistic anthropologist for failing to draw the correct conclusion.

And maybe it wasn't so important, anymore, that outsiders see Silesia as German. By then, the reaffirmation of the borders, as well as the "Treaty . . . on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation" of July 17, 1991 had greatly increased the ability of Opole Silesian villages to establish positive working and patronage relationships with a range of Western German municipalities and civic organizations. Many more recently established relationships allow Opole Silesians to be open and honest about their cultural practices and historical experiences. Indeed, Berlińska argues that overall, what drives German interest in helping communities in Poland is the borderland experience itself: a large proportion of such relationships are established between communities in the historical western and northern borderlands of Germany and communities in the former German eastern territories, whether now inhabited by an indigenous or an immigrant Polish population (Berlińska: personal communication). On the other hand, perhaps the other part of the formula had also changed, and I was no longer being treated as an outsider.

In from the Edges

After the German visitors had climbed back into their bus, ready to go on to the center of the village, and the professor, the local man and I had gotten back into the car, the local man said to me, "Not all Silesians identify as German."

"I know," I said, "I've been here since November." After all, I had met one who does and one who does not on my first day in Dobra.

This chapter began with introductions and has ended with inside knowledge. It both began and has ended with people's eagerness to introduce themselves to outsiders in terms of ethnic national identity, but with a change in orientation: at the beginning, I was the one whose impressions were being managed, while by the time I was invited to Ostrów, I was watching others' impressions managed. In between, one small item of autochthonous Opole Silesian formed a juxtaposition, and that was the shared, cultural reluctance to share personal names with outsiders.

In the discussion of "boundaries" in the first chapter, I noted that all humans draw boundaries. So, where are the edges of German identity in Opole Silesia? Is this a German village? Who gets to see that boundary, and who gets to define it, and using what criteria? All identity assertions point to boundaries. But the edges aren't enclosing empty space, or something that is just the same within as beyond, like a cookie cutter on rolled-out dough. The instrumentalist claim, that identity is a matter of practical advantage, is inadequate in Opole Silesia. The political, practical, and financial advantages by no means do justice to the motivations of German-identifying autochthonous Opole Silesians, although they have a rough and ready relevance, as far as they go. Nor are those who assert Silesian identity moved solely by reaction to their German-identified neighbors. If we are to understand these assertions, we need to focus on what is inside the edges. Assertions *of* identity are made *from* identity. Understanding the widespread reluctance to share personal names is only a minimal beginning, in that regard.