THE BORDERLAND AND ITS CULTURAL SEPARATENESS

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In the reality of the creation of the new civilizational face of the world, caused primarily by scientific and technical progress, international legal and formal solutions, education oriented on shaping the understanding of directions of cultural changes, one can observe trends both to unification and diversification of the image of human life, and in that the blurring of the boundaries between the core values of cultural life. In this image the strength of tradition is confronted with a modernity. Political divisions of the world are an example of this reality, and in that the blurring of the boundaries between the states. In the formation of the new spatial-political division borderlands are becoming a specific stage. For them important tasks are appointed in close-up among states, nations and ethnic groups, which are directly adjacent, and in that remains in the tradition of mythologized relationship, usually about the negative colouring.

Borderlands are differently comprehended in the global and local space. Frequently the borderlands are understood as a part of the country lying near the border, extremity, end, the boundaries of an area. In local reality, it refers to a specific geographical and cultural space, for example in Poland the concept of the 'borderlands' is generally used to denote the lands lying

east of the Bug River. The scope of the term refers to: 1. Geography, 2. Demography, 3. History, 4. Culture, 5. Economy.

From the geographical point of view this term means areas and territories located on the outskirts of certain cultural centres. In ancient times, it was a degree of recognizing the geographical horizon and the state of drafted maps that decided about their cultural power. In the Middle Ages, in modern times and today political references are generating this power. The organization of political structures, including states, causes that they are not clearly defined. However, they are used to define the border area of the individual states.

In regard to the legacy of the past, one can notice that for the ancient Chinese it was the territory lying outside their state. In the Chinese state, which is considered as one of the oldest civilizations of the world, geographical space was presented in symbolic forms. Each of the four sides of the world was defined as a time of year, animal, element and colour. The East was seen as spring (nature awakening to life, the beginning of the day), symbolized by signs of water, dragon and the blue-green colour (the colour of the sea). The South was seen as summer, fire, the phoenix and the red colour. The West- the fall (natural sleep time), rain, tiger and white colour. The North – ground, bear, main point, centre. Their own country as a sacred centre was defined by a yellow colour, which was identified with the colour of the local earth and the colour of the skin of the people who settled there.

Similar symbols functioned in the cultural reality of other states. Different borrowings also appeared. For example, it is noted that "when the Chinese were using the spatial frame of the world to organize the components of nature, Ancient Greeks had planetary gods (…) In Greece, colour, plant, vowel, metal or stone were attributed to each of the planetary gods. Cosmology linked with the spatial frame of the world was more static from that of Cosmology, which didn't have such a spatial linking. Chinese spirits of nature and gods didn't have dynamism and free will, which characterized Greek gods. Although Western culture didn't create ordered cosmological systems, which was based on the sides of the world, they often appeared in the conceptualization of different kinds of symbolic space. In ancient Greece, the East and West had different symbolic mean-

ings. The East was associated with light, white colour, sky, rising; the West suggested darkness, ground and falling. Most of the post Doric temples were oriented to the East"[1].

*I*n geographical order, the oldest image of the cosmos proclaimed that the specified cultural centre is the circle of the ground surrounded by the great river- the ocean[2]. This was reflected on maps. As the centre of the world was considered Jerusalem and in the Muslim world – Mecca.

Rivers are an essential indicator of borderland. They play the logistical role in the creation of the centres of cultural life. New civilizations were formed above them, for example on the river Yangtze – Chinese, on the Ganges – Indian, on the Tigris and Euphrates – Babylon, on the Rhine – Western European. Rivers were the boundary points, which separate the different cultures.

Geographical considerations caused significant demographic changes. In the historical development people are usually divided into two groups: 1. autochthons and 2. allochthons. Autochthons are communities settled in the determined space from generation to generation, while allochthons are people moving in the space. Autochthons are perceived as a people who attaches great importance to the local traditions they are characterized by conservative attitude, cultural backwardness. While allochthons adapt to the new socio- political and economic realities, reveal large civilization activity. Allochthons usually settle in the centres of civilization. On borderlands usually autochthons and allochthons are settled, but autochthons are the ones dominated. That is why borderline is seen as a mainstay of tradition, old rituals, attachment to the local cultural values.

From a political point of view, borderlands constitute a special reality. It is the regularity that states and nations are trying to expand their territory, to acquire wealth, lines of communication and a privileged political position. Borderlands in this regard are the theatre of combat there are also links of communication and establishing contacts. Often in these areas wars were begun and ended. In these areas military forces were concentrated.

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[1] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Przestrzeń i miejsce*, Warszawa 1987, p. 124–125.
[2] A. Piskozub, *Między historiozofią a geozofią*, Gdańsk 1994, p. 51–52.

The history of borderlands gives testimony of fraternal struggles and bloody battles. In the thick of the struggle local community is usually located. It bears all the consequences. Local community usually distinguished local patriotism. These communities occur in defense of their land, which leads to loss of life, severe repression and destruction of material.

The borderlands have specific cultural values. These are places, where a variety of influences and impacts are crossing. Generally, these are the spaces of multiculturalism and multiculturalism is shaping the attitude of tolerance, understanding of cultural, ethnic and religious differences. Local roots generate large attachment to folklore and native culture.

In the economic aspect borderlands are often lagging areas. They are characterized by exploitation trends. Politicians treat these spaces as an economic base. On borderlands the authorities did not conduct important business investment, because these areas were seen through the prism of so-called 'political uncertainty'. It resulted from the experience of the past when in a situation of international conflicts, in these areas the greatest damage took place. In the twentieth century, ideological changes took place in this regard, including clashes of ideological systems. The border areas started being treated in propaganda and in an agitation way. Therefore, in some countries, modern technological solutions were placed in these areas, which changed agriculture, industry and the image of human life.

Frequently, borderlands were seen from the point of view of the geographical determinism. It reveals in this regard the reference to the political thought of French philosopher Montesquieu from the 18th century, which was included in the book *The Spirit of the Laws*. Montesquieu in his book among others indicated that climate directly affects human physiology and that climate is an important factor in determining human behaviour. This philosopher drew attention to the structure of the soil and soil fertility. He claimed, among others, "that the barren of the soil in Attica created there a government of the people and the fertility of the soil in Sparta, created there a government of the aristocrats3. In the stereotypical perception,

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[3] J. Litwin, *Szkice krytyczne o determinizmie geograficznym i geopolityce*, Warszawa 1956, p. 12 – 13.

the borderlands are the space with a large diversity of landscape", often not available to 'be crossed' (mountains, swamps), which results in the formation of attitudes and behaviours of autochthonous, closeness, cultural conservatism.

Despite the large cultural diversity borderlands reveal universal features. Borderlands are characterized by the following relations: 1. Centre – periphery, 2. The clash of tradition and modernity, 3. Confluence of cultures[4]. The concepts of the centre and periphery have timeless character. They were known in the world's oldest political organizations because norms and patterns of attitudes, behaviours, actions, functioned differently on the periphery and in the center of organized life, and particularly in cultural centres. New forms of socio- political life were created in big agglomerations. In our times in this regard substantial changes are taking place. In information communities people are leaving large metropolises and are moving to their edges. It results from many nuisances associated with functioning in big metropolises (for example in the field of communication[5]).

For centuries, the most important political and legal institutions were placed in the centres of cities, in the capitals of states. The result was that the peripheral centres became a reality of "wayside". The values of civilization reached their late, or even consciously they were not introduced there. The exception to this state was the centres- periphery relations in the Roman Empire. The entirety of civilized life was concentrated in Rome. Territories adjacent to Rome were called the provinces, which were managed by governors. Governors had complete administrative, military and judicial authority. They led exploratory policy. Governors committed different abuses against the people living in the provinces. In the Middle Ages, these relationships were revealed in the whole of Europe. There were centres in which political, educational and cultural institutions functioned. Countries were divided into the central and borderlands parts, for example Germany was divided into counties and marches. Guarding the borders of

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[4] See S. Uliasz, *O kategorii pogranicza kultur*, in: *Pogranicze kultur*, ed. C. Kłaka, Rzeszów 1997, p. 9 – 20; M. Kosman, *O kresach w historii i legendzie. Studia i szkice z dziejów polskiej granicy wschodniej*, Poznań 2011.

[5] See A. Toffler, *Trzecia fala*, Warszawa 1997, ch. XVI.

the country was the duty of marches. A clear division in this regard existed in the Russian Empire. In this country the borderlands were treated as an area where authorities could carry out various socio- political experiments. As a result, on the western borders of the Russian Empire a wide ethnic and religious diversity was formed. The tsarist authorities forced the various ethnic groups to resettle. In particular, they had to leave such metropolises as St. Petersburg and Moscow. The population of borderlands was used to colonize other areas, for example Siberia and the Caucasus[6].

Borderlands in the dimension of cultural changes constitute a clash of cultures and civilizations[7]. In their spaces a continuous cultural fight is taking place. External patterns influence the values of the autochthonous culture. Politicians are trying to subordinate autochthonous communities to themselves. They do this by using the instruments of law, education, upbringing, and often also under the pressure of coercion. Autochthonous communities usually undergo outside influences. The consequences of these are dichotomous attitudes. Dispersion of the places where the population is living supports this phenomenon. The borderlands communities operate mainly in rural structures, on a high degree of dispersion. In the cultural clash, priority is usually obtained by 'superficial' stronger factors. They are understood as a conscious policy of the authorities. This is reflected, among others, in educational policy (including personnel selection and program selection) and also in ethnic, religious and socio – cultural policy. Usually the majority imposes minorities its patterns of attitudes and behaviours, which is expressed in a language, religion, rituals and culture of work.

In the cultural clash, the special role is played by allochthonous individuals, who present high level of socio- political activity. They are seen as carriers of modernity and progress. Cultural clashes enrich both the customers of new values and themselves, and they also support differ-

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[6] See A. Chodubski, *Kresowi pisarze – zesłańcy wobec wyzwań cywilizacyjnych Kaukazu,* [in:] *Literatury i języki Słowian wschodnich. Stan obecny i tendencje rozwojowe*, Opole 1997, p. 113 – 116.

[7] See K. Kwaśniewski, *Zderzenie kultur. Tożsamość a aspekty konfliktów i tolerancji*, Poznań 1982; A. Chodubski, *Tradycja słowiańska a wartości cywilizacji zachodniej w polskim rodowodzie kulturowym*, in: *Na obrzeżach polityki*, ed. M. Kosman, Poznań 2008.

ent redefinitions. In the clashes, "unstable" and "outdated" values usually disappear.

Similar processes occur in the "vicinity of cultures", which is found in borderlands. Just as in the clashes, the struggle, and often coercion, reveals, so in the vicinity of cultures a mutual interest appears and the desire to assimilate certain patterns and behaviours. These processes occur both in the sphere of cultural awareness and unconsciously[8]. This vicinity occurs under certain territorial structures of the state, but also has an international range. In these areas, there is a characteristic phenomenon of bilingualism in social communication. Cultural diversity occurring in the vicinity usually gives birth to a new quality, called multiculturalism. Long-term phenomena and processes of interpenetration of different patterns of attitudes, behaviours and aspirations create a specific type of human with awareness typical for him called borderland[9].

The specific type of a "man of borderlands" reveals the problem of his identity. In this regard, there appear basic questions: 1. Who are the people of borderlands? 2. What is their ancestry? 3. What values do they represent? 4. What aspirations and desires do they have? With regard to the first question, the question arises whether it is the original identity or the structure of multiculturalism? It is noted that the identity of borderland on the macro scale is a phenomenon of the original. This identity is co-created by multiculturalism. People of borderland create community strongly tied to localism. These people submit to the cultural values over civilization values. The cultural values mean passing from generation to generation certain patterns of attitudes, behaviours, evaluations and political and economic actions. The civilizational values mean orientation on modernity, orientation on the external influences which dominate in the global order[10].

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[8] See A. Kłoskowska, *Sąsiedztwo kultur i trening we wzajemności*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo" 1991, No. 4, p. 3–5.; W. Olszewski, *Patriotyzm i tolerancja*, Toruń 2001.

[9] See S. Uliasz, *Literatura Kresów – kres literatury*, Rzeszów 1994; J. Kolbuszewski, *Kresy*, Wrocław 1995.

[10] L. Zacher, *Gry o przyszłe światy*, Warszawa 2006; E. Polak, *Globalizacja a zróżnicowanie społeczno-ekonomiczne*, Warszawa 2009.

In the borderland origin, what is primarily noted is the strength of autochthonous people, who have lived for many generations in a particular space and communities displaced from other regions that accept the new reality in which they live. These communities keep the ethnic and religious separateness and the traditions and customs, which are treated as *sacrum* (privacy). In the official life, they follow the patterns of majority, which exist in the particular space.

In the area of value, population of borderland has a specific approach to: 1. Politics, 2. Social life, 3. Culture, 4. Economy, 5. Civilizational challenges. These communities, despite "their remoteness", demonstrate great interest in politics. It reveals in this regard a large individualism of the attitudes and the behaviour of individuals. The individuals often aspire to the highest governance. History and the present provide images that among so-called outstanding individuals many of them originated from the community of borderland. These individuals are characterized by entrepreneurship, political courage, pragmatism and efficient measures. From the Polish point of view in their attitudes and behaviours combine elements typical for positivist reality with romantic idealism, which often causes that the heroes suffer defeat in the battle for worthy causes.

Public tolerance for different behaviours and attitudes, patience in action, orientation towards traditional forms of human coexistence and are characteristic in public life. Typical features are the hospitality and banquet-ness. These features can be seen especially in low-income communities. In the social action area, people of borderland demonstrate numerous anarchic qualities. These people keep a lot of distance to the prescriptive system and high unpunctuality in action.

Local cultures of borderland are characterized by a large diversity. Among others, the achievements of generations in the field of music, dance, sculpture, applied arts and construction are taken care of by them. The communities of borderland often attach great importance to cultivate literary output. People appreciate their literary talents and writers are surrounded by esteem.

In the economic reality in the border areas temporality can be observed – phenomena of adaptation to short-term cultural requirements. Generally in the image of the cultural life spiritual values are submitted

above material values. It results from the historical experience. In the historical process communities borderland often experienced damage of their property caused by invaders.

The value of the borderland is acquiring significant importance in the conditions of creating a global civil society, including the concentration of actions on the "extreme edges"[11]. It is noted that the most important socio-political phenomena take place on the borderland of functioning between different cultural entities, at the interface of different styles of thinking and creating a different vision of the world, which underlie the different cultures. The cultural life is concentrated at the points of intersection, in areas where various meanings collide with each other[12].

Borderlands are an important link in international communication, which is a challenge of the modern information world[13]. They are a kind of embody of polyphony. On the borderland "one's own word" overgrows in the contexts of "words of others". The statement is always saturated with the sounds of dialogue[14]. The specificity of the language is shaped in borderland areas. Most often their residents in the social communication use a few languages. These people also acquire foreign languages. Under the conditions of immigration population coming from the borderlands easily adapts, integrates and assimilates. The emigrants from these areas often deal with translations.

Towards the creation of supranational structures, standardization and unification of the world, social categories – countrymen – strangers are subject to revaluation. These categories have a particular value on the borderlands, because the division between them is fading away. The home-liness is waking an interest in the strangeness. It is a test of the strength of the locality in the face of strangeness. In direct contact it is possible to see themselves and their culture in the mirror of other cultures. Communing

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[11] See J. Naisbitt, *Megatrendy. Dziesięć nowych kierunków zmieniających nasze życie*, Poznań 1997.

[12] See L. Witkowski, *Uniwersalizm pogranicza. O semiotyce kultury Michała Bachtina w kontekście edukacji*, Toruń 1991.

[13] See E. Polak, *Przemiany cywilizacji współczesnej w sferze kultury materialnej*, Gdańsk 1996, ch. II.

[14] S. Uliasz, *O kategorii pogranicza…*, s. 15.

with each representative of different cultures causes that "*foreign*" becomes just "*different*", who is experiencing tolerance for his "*otherness*" from the side of "*his countrymen*".

The image of the borderland life is called sometimes threshold, because it often reminds functioning of the people at the threshold of certain cultural realities. These people are often exposed to continuous choices and socio- political and economic redefinitions, which primarily relate to national and ethnic options. It results largely from the official policy of the authorities, who often treat the borderlands in an instrumental and marginal way. In the state policy, the interests and the local reality of borderlands are included to a small extent. In this case, the population of borderland functions in the so-called "dramaturgy of the time on the threshold". Depending on the political attitudes this population must adapt to the certain cultural reality.

Despite their specificity, the borderlands in the traditional culture are carriers of the national values of the country, which they are bound with. So-called "ethical vigilance" and sensitivity on so-called "*another person's arguments*" function on borderlands. People are characterized by persistence in the pursuing of their rights.

The characteristic criteria of the interpersonal communication are revealed on borderlands. They consist of such components as: respect for others' views and axiological beliefs; treating the other as a partner in the common search for "*truth*", and not as an enemy who must be overthrown; keeping the tolerance and understanding for arguments of other partner[15].

Borderlands have a special dimension in the cultural reality of Poland. This is revealed in many contexts. One of them is expressed in the idea that Poland is a borderland country in the reality of Western Europe. More often they are used in the narrowest sense and refer to the border regions – as eastern areas of the borderland[16]. The category "borderlands" does not have any explicit content, which is supported by political thought,

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[15] See J. Szczepański, *Kultury pogranicza*, "Przegląd Humanistyczny" 1990, No. 10, p. 2; M. Kosman, *Polska w drugim tysiącleciu*, vol. 1, Toruń 2007, p. 155.

[16] See W. Wrzesiński, *Kresy czy pogranicze? Problem ziem zachodnich i północnych w polskiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX w.,* [in]: *Między Polską etniczną a historyczną*, Wrocław 1988, p. 119 – 163.

such as literary and scientific knowledge. It often refers pejoratively to the civilizational reality. Borderlands are identified with the location outside the centre and the cultural and civilization backwardness. The distance towards the borderlands is manifested above all by their inhabitants, who don't want to be referred to as people of the borderlands.

A great reluctance can be observed in the use of the term "borderlands" in regard to the whole country, as a part of Western civilization[17]. In the Polish tradition borderlands are areas with a large degree of the national inconsistency, where political relations caused frequent changes of borders. This term came into wider use in the seventeenth century, which was connected with territorial expansion. Ethnographer Jan Stanisław Bystroń characterizing the Borderlands noted: "It was a dangerous and tempting school for enterprising and courageous people; some learned here knightly craft, while others earned a fortune"[18].

During the Polish expansion to the East, borderlands were treated as a "land of milk and honey". In the nineteenth century, this motif was emphasized by many outstanding authors of the Polish culture. This motif was mentioned by Adam Mickiewicz and Henryk Sienkiewicz; in the works of Wincenty Pol there were even words contained in the work *Pieśń o naszej ziemi (Song of Our Land)*:

> *Tu kraj całym jednym*
> *I nadany wszelkim płodem;*
> *Płynie mlekiem, płynie miodem*[19].

The idea of the unity of the borderlands with the whole country was a kind of paradigm, which was characteristic of nineteenth century litera-ture, art and research on culture and folklore. It caused that the "spiritual climate" of borderlands enveloped the whole of society. The mythologiza-tion of borderland provinces became widespread. Characteristic in this

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[17] See A. Piskozub, *Polska w cywilizacji zachodniej*, Gdańsk 1995.

[18] J.S. Bystroń, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce. Wiek XVI–XVIII*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1976, p. 43.

[19] W. Pol, *Wybór poezji*, Wrocław 1963, p. 195.

respect became the verses contained by Adam Mickiewicz in the work
Pan Tadeusz (Sir Thaddeus):

> *Do tych pagórków leśnych, do tych łąk zielonych,*
> *Szeroko nad błękitnym Niemnem rozciągnionym;*
> *Do tych pól malowanych zbożem rozmaitem,*
> *Wyzłacanych pszenicą, posrebrzanych żytem;*
> *Gdzie bursztynowy świerzop, gryka jak śnieg biała.*

The other direction of the mythologization of borderlands was con-
nected with the problem of folk character. The borderland was portrayed
as uncontaminated by civilization refuge of common people, who love
freedom, work, hospitality; associated with the land where they were born.
The third direction of the mythologization of borderlands is a vision of
the noble past of Poland. Borderlands was portrayed in the artistic works
as a "refuge of knightly virtues". Wincenty Pol wrote in the work *Mohort*:

> *… tylko tutaj I u takiej wiary*
> *I duch rycerski, i obyczaj stary*
> *Mógł się przechować jeszcze po staremu;*
> *I kto tu widział wszystko jeszcze cało*
> *Nie mógł nigdy nawet wierzyć temu*
> *Co się podówczas już w Warszawie działo,*
> *Lecz i na kresy przyszła w końcu kreska….*

A special role in the process of mythologizing borderlands and creating
their legends was played by a *Trilogy* by Henryk Sienkiewicz[20], which was
recognized by a wide circle of readers as a masterpiece. The *Trilogy* became
a kind of "the code of the love of the homeland". The legend of borderlands
as "the cradle of Polishness" is continues to this day, despite numerous
attempts to reevaluations in this area[21].

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[20] See *Trylogia Henryka Sienkiewicza. Studia, szkice, polemiki*, Warszawa 1962; M. Ko-
sman, *Henryka Sienkiewicza wizje Polski wspaniałej. Studia i szkice*, Poznań 1999.

[21] J. Kolbuszewski, *Legenda kresów w literaturze polskiej XIX i XX w.*, [in:] *Między
Polską etniczną a historyczną…*, p. 47 – 93.

After regaining independence in 1918, under the conditions of unifica-
tion of the country the problem of borderlands became important for
official factors and for many politicians. Among others, Jozef Pilsudski
spoke about them. He pointed out that: "The borderlands is a contact of
one nation with another, one culture with another, one upbringing with
the other"[22]. The policy of regionalization of the country raised the idea of
borderland. This policy was contained in the wake of an emotional con-
nection and attachment of communities to the places of residence. It was
implemented primarily by the education, culture and the minimization of
the economic problems. The purpose of these efforts were to rebuild the
Polish culture on the lands, which during the annexation were penetrated
by foreign cultures – on the eastern borderlands with Russian culture and
on the western borderlands by German culture. The legend of borderlands
referred only to these areas, which belonged politically to Poland. Histori-
cal borderlands were divided by state borders. In educational programs
slogans of vindication did not appear.

After World War II, under conditions of border changes and the forma-
tion of a new political area of the Polish state, borderlands became quite
an anachronistic category. A new value in this regard became *the Western
Lands* and a little later *Bieszczady*. It developed a new stereotype of the area
of Poland as a homeland. In 1953 Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński wrote:

> *Nam dzień się jako okno szerokie otwiera*
> *nad Wisłą i Odrą i Nysą.*
> *Ojczyzno Szopena, ojczyzno Waltera,*
> *waleczna ludowa ojczyzno.*

The issue of borderland was upheld in Polish political thought in exile.
These issues included the strong sentimental threads. Borderlands became
an unreal space. Borderlands were treated as the world of the past, where
there is no return. These were images of imagination, not always the exist-
ing reality.

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[22] There, p. 79.

The turnaround in the way of understanding of borderlands took place in the 70ˢ of the twentieth century. This turnaround was made thanks to the literary output of such authors as: Halina Auderska, Edward Redliński, Sokrat Janowicz. These writers, showing cultural changes taking place in Poland, were using images associated with the reality of borderland. Characteristic images were presented by Halina Auderska in the work *Ptasi gościniec* (*Bird's road*), Edward Redliński in the work *Konopielka* and – in the broadest and deepest way – Sokrat Janowicz in such a book *Dolina pełna losu* (*The valley full of the fate*) or *Terra incognita: Białoruś* (*Terra incognita: Belarus*). Since the 80ˢ special attention in this regard deserves essays of this writer published on the pages of the magazine "Czasopis", under the title *Bycie sobą* (*Being oneself*). The writer points out on borderland complexes writing: "How awfully full of complexes do you have to be to behave so barbarically?! (…).The logic of boors is as easy as pie: the one who fights with Belarusiannes is undoubtedly a patriot, Polish of course. But the one who comes out in defense of suppressed poor little things deserves to be called a nationalist, Belarusian of course. In general, Belarusian means for the crowd as much as chauvinist. Means Belarusian patriot- this is something impossible in the brain of the person from the street. He feels the best when there is such division: Pole – a patriot, Belarusian – a nationalist (…).Where do they come from and where they born in the society incurably sick of the complex of inferiority, keeping in the bowels a villein's self-destruction virus?! (…)This unique phenomenon cannot be explained by the general laws of social life, because previously these had been compromised on such a huge scale, that in the end these laws were perverted, collective balance was disturbed, like the famous drainage, which destroys the harmony of water in the deepening. The richer areas survived this craziness, but the Eastern Wall fell on its knees and here it is dying. Literally and figuratively"[23].

In recent years, there can be observed an increase of scientific and journalistic interest in regard to the borderlands. Attempts to show the truth about their past and present have been made. Borderlands has become an

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[23] S. Janowicz, *Bycie sobą*, "Czasopis" 1998, No. 10, s. 12.

important political category. The attitude of society to the borderlands, however, is a reflection of the policy of the official state organs.

Despite making numerous attempts at the revaluation of nature and meaning of the borderlands, in the socio-political practice there were no significant changes. Borderlands are seen as geographic, socio-political and economic spaces, as a cultural periphery, as socio-political facilities, sometimes even as a kinds of "semi colonies" to the centre. Despite the expressing of understanding for their cultural identity, a strong stereotype is functioning, which contains negative elements from the point of view of global changes. This concept is confined to the eastern border area. Despite attempts to embrace the territory of western Poland with this concept, the deliberate objective wasn't achieved. In everyday consciousness, there functions the belief that these areas are on a higher level of civilization. These areas are characterized by better organization of political life and a higher level of respect for the legal order.

In the reality of the global changes taking place, and especially in the situation of the weakening of state identity in favour of local and global relations, the growing importance of science and technology, general increase in the education of people, awareness of a sense of belonging to a world community, processes of migration of people etc., the understanding of the borderland in the cultural life of societies is being changed. Borderlands are situated in the reality of the highest importance for the changes of civilization. Borderland spaces are determined to play an important role in the development of relations with neighbouring countries. Frontier economic and cultural exchange is the promotion of the level of development of the country. In Europe this reality is attempted to be included in the organizational structure; Euro regions are to be these structures[24].

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[24] See *Regiony transgraniczne w Europie. Struktury, lokalizacja, cele. Materiały i dokumenty*, Warszawa 1993, No. 66; W. Malendowski, M. Ratajczak, *Euroregiony. Pierwszy krok do integracji europejskiej*, Wrocław 1998; P. Churski, *Czynniki rozwoju regionalnego i polityka regionalna w Polsce w okresie integracji z Unią Europejską*, Poznań 2008; M. Lechicka-Kostuch, *Determinanty rozwoju polskich regionów*, Sopot 2008; P. Solarz, *Polityka regionalna w Polsce w warunkach integracji europejskiej w latach2004–2010,* Warszawa 2011.

SUMMARY

In general reflection, the following can be stated:

1. Borderlands are the geographical and cultural reality that reveals itself along with the expanding of geographic horizons, also known as geographical discoveries.
2. In the process of evolutionary changes borderlines are considered in terms of stereotypes: economic backwardness, political conservatism, cultural remoteness.
3. Borderlands as border points of the state are a product of culture, which is shaped at the basis of cultural clashes, interactions and neighbourhood. Borderlands are creations of multiculturalism.
4. In the borderland areas unique personalities are created. These personalities are characterized by a high capacity to adapt to the new civilizational realities. They submit the spiritual values over the economic goods. They attach great importance to the traditional values of cultural life.
5. Borderlands often reveal specific civilizational hybrids. On borderlands opposing processes and phenomena are combined. The dichotomy of internal and external functioning is characteristic for the image of borderlands; the inside and outside concepts of particular borderland reality are both completely different.

Keywords: Borderland, outskirts, center, culture, civilization