Borderlands and civilizational encounter

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Abstract: The study presents a conception of Encounter in terms of relations between people belonging to different civilizations. According to the author, these relations emerge in the particular circumstances of the Borderland as a result of the state of balance established between two social systems. Then the author describes in turn the social system model, the conception of the Borderland and his understanding of civilization. Finally he raises the question of crossing civilizational borders in the course of expansion and places the Encounter in respect to this issue.

Key Words: Civilization, encounter, borderland.

Resumen: En el texto se propone un concepto del Encuentro entendido como una relación entre las personas que pertenecen a diferentes civilizaciones. Según el autor, este tipo de relaciones surge en las específicas condiciones de la Zona Fronteriza, como resultado del estado de equilibrio entre dos sistemas sociales. Por consiguiente, el autor describe en turno el modelo del sistema social, el concepto de la Zona Fronteriza y su definición de la civilización. Finalmente plantea el tema del cruce de las fronteras de la civilización durante la expansión y sitúa el Encuentro con respecto a esta cuestión.

Palabras clave: Civilización, encuentro, zona fronteriza.

This study is aimed at indicating the specificity of the relations developed between different civilizations in the region of borderlands. I apply the name of "borderland" to this part of the social system space, which is directly linked to an open border. I mean in particular the situation marked by the constant presence of an Alien territory just beyond the border (in ethnic, cultural or political sense). Albeit not each neighbourhood led to the formation of the proper border, not only a movable one, but also an open one. And not always the consciousness of the presence of Aliens beyond the border led to a confrontation, which would bear as fruits new forms of the civilization.

Secondly I assume that this kind of border is characterized not just by the presence of cultural, religious and political discrepancies, but by the existence of different civilizational identities. This statement requires some explanation as far as the essence of the

civilization is concerned. I find it necessary to underline that in the era of globalization a multi-civilizational character of the world still remains true and leads to some important consequences.

My definite purpose is to prove the existence of the specific form of human relations, which develop between people who, although living in close neighbourhood, remain Aliens to each other. Within the spectrum of one civilization, people of different cultures, as well as those of different religions, can enter the relation named as Dialogue. It is a distinctive feature of the European civilization. However neither it is the only one nor a universal one. In reference to the so-called "clash of civilizations", I would like to stress the particular experience of the civilizational Encounter. It remains a matter to be given some thought as to whether this kind of relations can emerge nowadays as still another option to the Dialogue on the one side and the destruction/catastrophe on the other side.

The argument, that I am going to deploy, will refer to historical examples, however I will not endeavour to produce exhaustive documentation, or interpretation. I will apply notions specific for the general theory of systems according to the convention I had accepted in my previous research, and therefore I will examine the relations between the social system and its environment and neighbourhood.[1] I make references to the conclusions, which so far only partially have been published internationally[2].

When I talk about civilization, I think about the common fact that people are used to refer to realities that go beyond their own culture. These extra-cultural relations are real and determine our perception of the world and our communication capabilities.[3]

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[1] Jan KIENIEWICZ, *Wprowadzenie do historii cywilizacji Wschodu i Zachodu*, Warsaw, Dialog, 2003, pp. 38-42.

[2] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "The Stationary System in Kerala", *Hemispheres*, 1, 1985, pp. 7-40; Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Stationary Societies of Pre-colonial India: Feudal or Asiatic?"*, 17th International Congress of Historical Sciences*, I, Chronological Section, Madrid, 1992, pp. 70-7.

[3] See Norbert ELIAS, *El proceso de la civilización. Investigaciones sociogenéticas y psicogenéticas*, Mexico, FCE, 1987; Terry EAGLETON, *La idea de la cultura. Una mirada política sobre los conflictos culturales*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2000.

However they cannot only be reduced to the inter-cultural relations.[4] My quest for the realities that correspond to this human intuition has been shaped by the experience of the research on the relations developing during times of expansions.[5] It cannot be denied that in the course of this research I was influenced by different specialists such as Immanuel Wallerstein[6] and Edward Said[7]. However simultaneously, the theories advanced by the Polish philosopher of history, Feliks Koneczny (1862-1949)[8], and those of the French historian Fernand Braudel exerted an equally important impact on me.[9] Finally I have adopted my own way of analysing and interpreting, which I consider to be of systemic character. It can also be called eclectic or cultural-materialistic.[10] It would not fit into for example the non-Marxist historic materialism or into the diverse versions of the World-Systems theory[11]. Taking into account that in my approach I assume the

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[4] See also J.H. BENTLEY, "Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History", *The American Historical Review*, 101/3, 1996, pp. 749-70.

[5] *Od ekspansji do dominacji. Próba teorii kolonializmu*, Warsaw, Czytelnik, 1986; "In The "Heart of Darkness": An Attempt to Interpret Colonialism as a New Transformation of a Backward Social System", *Hemispheres*, 7, 1992, pp. 43-52; "Periphery and Backwardness: An Essay in the Interpretation of Colonialism", in: *17e Congrès International des Sciences Historiques*, II, Madrid, 1992, pp. 771-8.

[6] I refer more to the Wallerstein of the *The Modern World System* than that of *The End of the World as we know it*.

[7] I refer more to *Orientalism* rather than to *Imperialism and Culture*.

[8] His work, poorly known internationally, in the Communist Poland was passed in silence. Feliks KONECZNY, *On the Plurality of Civilisation*, London, Polonica Publications, 1962 (original edition: 1935).

[9] Fernand BRAUDEL, "L'histoire des civilisations: le passé explique le présent" en: *Écrits sur l'histoire*, Paris, Flammarion, 1969, pp. 255-314 (or. ed. 1959).

[10] Krzysztof BRZECHCZYN, *O wielości linii rozwojowych w procesie historycznym. Próba interpretacji społeczeństwa meksykańskiego*, Poznan, Wydawn Naukowe UAM, 2004, pp. 16.

[11] Cf. Walter L. GOLDFRANK, "Paradigm Regained? The Rules of Wallerstein's World-System Method", *Journal of World-System Research*, VI/2, 2000, Special Issue: Festschrift for Immanuel Wallerstein – Part I, p. 150. Despite all Wallestein's approach to the system is close to mine, "World

existence of God, it is perhaps pointless to try to fit it into any of those classifications...[12] In that respect, please refer to a more extensive paper, which I have published in the "Pensamiento y Cultura"[13].

Social system and expansion

Given the enormous ethnic, linguistic, economic, social and customary diversity of societies... the only solution seems to be to deal with them on the basis of the principles specific for the general theory of systems[14]. It assumes that any society is
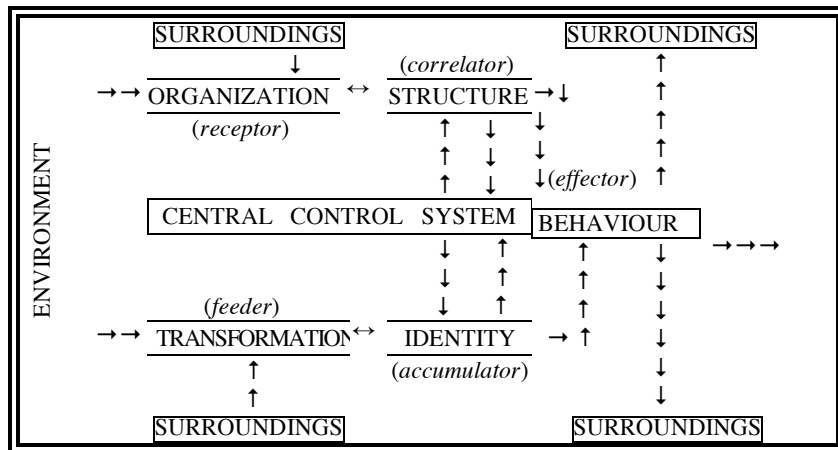

Fig.1 Model of the social system[15].

system vesus world-system. A critique", in: Andre Gunder FRANK and Barry K. GILLS (eds.), *The World System: five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?*, London/New York, Routledge, 1993, p. 294.

[12] See also Feliks KONECZNY, *O ład w historii*, Warsaw, Nortom, 1999 (work finished in 1948). One of the first studies: A. HILCKMAN, "Feliks Koneczny und die Verleichende Kulturwissenschaft", *Saeculum*, II, 1952, h. 4.

[13] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "El sistema de los valores y el encuentro de las civilizaciones", *Pensamiento y Cultura*, Instituto de Humanidades, Universidad de La Sabana, Bogota, 8, 2005.

[14] George J. KLIR (ed.), *Trends in General Systems Theory*, New York, Wiley-Interscience, 1972.

[15] Explanations: **organization**: set of features defining the system. **Structure**: constant, unchangeable part of the organization; set of relations

an autonomous system, able to exist, maintain or modify its structure and its identity depending on the approach to the solving of problems caused by the relations with the surrounding and the environment.

The system maintains its balance due to the feedbacks, so that the mechanism that reacts to the stimuli is of crucial importance, and in particular if those stimuli are very strong –supported by a sufficient amount of energy. The name of "clash" could be given to those relations, which lead to the loss of balance, regardless of the mechanism that allows the system to regain it. The reactions produced within the framework of the system organization mean adjustments and the those involving the system structure imply adaptation.

The model presented above does not allow to fix the place or the part the society plays in the larger community. Its only use is to attempt to put some order into all that I know and to reconstruct the social behaviour. It does not allow to differentiate between the flow of the matter, the energy and the information and it should be borne in mind that it is aimed only at facilitating the process of reasoning and the comparison between completely different societies. It proves undoubtedly useful in the examination of the relations between the system and its surrounding. It allows to grasp more precisely the essence of the existence, that is the identity, and the question of its modifications. In order to achieve the proposed objective, the following processes will be of crucial importance: the processes of structure modifications, and that means also these of the reception of external stimuli and consequently those of the modification of the

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between the variables of the system. **Transformation**: set of rules defining how the occurencies in the neihgbourhood influence the state of the system. **Identity**: ability to exist, defined by a set of identifying variables, that is of the elements necessary to recognize the system. **Central control system**: (*homeostat)*: the factors determining the maintenance of the system in the state of functional balance. **Environment**: ecosystem in which lives the society. **Surrounding**: other systems, regardless of their features. $\rightarrow$ indicates the flow of matters, energy and information: to the system, inside and outside the system; $\leftrightarrow$ feedback.

system identity, processes of the loss of control over the regulations (adjustments within the framework of the organization) and over the adaptations (modifications of structure). Ultimately all these phenomena refer to the human behaviour, however I assume that they take place within the spectrum of particular societies. The second important good point of the presented model is the possibility it gives, to assess the character of the relations that develop between the society and the environment. In this case we can also watch the indicators and analyse the hypothetical courses of action, mainly over long periods of time and not perceptible in direct contact. The impact the society has upon the environment and the ensuing reactions have a significant importance for the homoeostasis of the whole system.

The societies of different degree of complexity, with diverse relations towards the natural environment, give rise to sets of actions and patterns of behaviour, which are aimed at carrying out the adjustment and the adaptation (transformation) processes and to shape such behaviour, which preserves the homoeostasis of the system. We can then talk about the social and the economic communities, and about bonds, i.e. about culture. The culture plays a crucial regulatory role.

The culture is a main part of what I call "the central control system", and it is responsible for the steering processes. However in order to maintain the functional balance of the system other factors are also necessary. These are the values. The central control system is not a real, however easily identified set of principles, values, convictions, beliefs serving to maintain the functional balance. And in particular to maintain the identity. It is of paramount importance to seize the capabilities people have to create specific bonds and to enter particular human relations with people from other societies. A very unique, albeit also significant circumstance is the capability to shape the projects of one's own future, and therefore the projects of new form of civilization.

Both notions of "surrounding" and "environment", used in the model, require detailed explanation. However it is impossible to differentiate precisely the society from the ecosystem, it is therefore possible to classify the relations that develop between them. They

have considerable importance as regards the functioning of the social system, including the culture. People basically derive energy from the environment –and this energy can be somehow assessed. Reciprocally they exert an impact on the environment by all their forms of behaviour, and in particular by the pressure to exploit its resources according to their needs and interventions. The relations with the surrounding, that is with other societies, are the result of the work and the wealth division, the relations of power and domination, and the ensuing acceptance or rejection. From this perspective one can analyse the reactions of the system to reconstruct its structure and the models of transformations. It is also possible to assess the state of the system by the character of its relations with the environment and with the surrounding. These basic relations may be of ecological equilibrium or lack of it, and of autonomy or dependence.

Expansion is a particular feature of the social systems. The model described above allows to show the dislocation of people outside their own habitat, regardless of the genesis or the motives, as a process of internal problem solving. The aggressive behaviour towards some other system (the surrounding) leads to the repercussions, which can be analysed in terms of the process of disturbing and re-establishing the functional balance of the system. The expansion leads to a situation, in which liberated energy goes beyond the limits of the own system and breaks the safety barriers of another system. Therefore the people, and with them their culture, penetrate into a alien territory in order to subdue it. It means that the matter, the energy and the information of one system gains the possibility to influence the organization and even the structure of another system.

I used this model mainly to analyse the consequences of the the different stages of the European expansion. It was a reality of action and reaction of different intensity and diverse consequences. I focused in particular on the processes accompanying the intrusion of Aliens, for I was extremely interested in the probabilities of their rejection and in the circumstances of their subordination. In the latter the intervention leads to non-autonomous forms of transformation, what finally disturbs the processes of system control. The colonialism is the most conspicuous effect of the expansion. One of the others is the

phenomenon of the collaboration with the expansion [16] and what I call "the backwardness".[17]

The expansion takes on different forms, depending on the resources of the energy searching for the outlet. All the phenomena described in terms of great expansions, migrations of peoples, establishment of economic relations are always a result of increased efforts. In those relations overwhelming cannot be avoided. Therefore the systemic description of relations puts stress on the flows of energy, matter and information circulating between the communities and between the cultural systems. I take into account the state of balance between the involved forces, allowing the systems structures to maintain the capability to undergo autonomous transformations. This image should be then translated into particular situations with concrete people. These people, with their culture and a particular system of values they belong to, are the ones who carry out the expansion, which means that they re-locate their civilization into a foreign space. Let us see first how these relations can look like between people who belong to different civilizations and who have found themselves on the same territory and within the limits of the same social system. However beforehand I would like to focus on the specific situation in which, two expansionist systems, which belong to different civilizations, clash between each other.[18]

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[16] See a classical study by Ronald ROBINSON, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration", in: Roger OWEN, Bob *Sutcliffe* (eds.), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, London, Longman, 1972, pp. 118-140.

[17] See also Jan KIENIEWICZ, "The Stationary System in Kerala", *Hemispheres*, I, 1985, pp. 7-40.

[18] The forms of expression vary considerably according to the system of culture, and I think it is one of the distinctive features of a civilization, see also K. GAWLIKOWSKI, "The 'civilisation of struggle' in the West and apreciation of harmony in the East Asia: Philosophical and social implications of the two approaches", *Dialogue and Universalism*, XIII/7-8, 2003, pp. 17-48.

Bordeland as a result of an expansion

The Pyrenean Peninsula between the 8th and the 13th century is a fine example of the confrontation of the people and the societies, which belonged to two neighbouring civilizations.[19] The particularity of this example consists in the formation of separate projects existing on the borderlands between the *christianitas latina*, still in the process of making, which would later gave rise to the European civilization, and the civilization of *umma*, which would later take shape of the Muslim civilization. The first of the projects was the creation of the Andalusian civilization, embracing people of different origin, different faith, however undoubtedly remaining under the influence of the Arabic culture. In opposition to her, emerged the Hispanic civilization, including multilingual local population, different religions and undoubtedly linked to the Latin tradition.

Al-Andalus was a product of centuries of the expansion of Islam in a country that was first Romanized and then Christianized, and had a deep tradition of the presence of different civilizations. Above all this project was the effect of the co-existence of Christians, Muslims and Jews within the range of the impact of Arabic culture and Arabic language. It gave rise to a community, separated from the rest of the Islamic world, in which the sense of belonging was connected to the way of life, unlike both this of the Christian North and that of the Islamic Maghreb. However this community, based on the co-existence of different religions, was not deprived of some forms of antagonism, the clear testimony of which are for example the transformation of the natural environment.[20]

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[19] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Andaluzja, Hiszpania i pogranicza cywilizacji: współczesna perspektywa historycznej konfrontacji", in: M. KOŹMIŃSKI (ed.), *Cywilizacja europejska. Wykłady i eseje*, Warsaw, Scholar/Collegium Cicitas Press, 2004, pp. 79-89.

[20] An idealized or demonized community according to the approach of the researcher (see the polemics between Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez Albornoz); nowadays the approach is more realistic, see Antonio DOMÍNGUEZ ORTIZ, "Las 'tres culturas' en la historia de España", in: *España. Reflexiones sobre el ser de España*, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, 1998, pp. 171-193.

In turn the Medieval *Hispania* was an attempt to revive the idea of the Visigoth kingdom, encompassing the entire Iberian Peninsula as a Christian province. However in the era of the reconquest it also embraced the Christians of the Arabic culture (*mozarabes)* and the Muslims seeking refuge under the Christian rule from orthodox Berber Islam (*mudejares)* and of course the Jews. This community also differentiated from the rest of the Christian world by their way of life. And it was gradually taking consciousness of forming a unity with all its diversity.[21] These societies were 'organized to war', the constant presence of which consolidated the principle and the practice of individual freedom. Both civilizations aspired to taking a full control over the same territory of the ancient Iberia, and were mutually exclusive, however they remained closely related to each other. The border between the two was a moveable, transparent and political one.[22]

In the 14th century, when the reconquest came to an end, the emirate of Granada was the only Muslim state left along with the Christian kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula. The balance had been disturbed, albeit the influence of the Andalusian civilization lasted almost two centuries more. In 1492 the civilization of *Al-Andalus* lost its last political foundations and was then devoured by the oriental Muslim world. Also the Hispanic civilization did not manage to maintain its autonomy from Europe, still in the process of making, and in order to settle durable foundations of a nation rejected the multi-religious model. Spain build a world-wide empire, which expanded its culture all around the world, however it could not safeguard its own

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[21] See also Julio VALDEÓN BARUQUE, "La idea de España en el siglo XIV", in: Vicente PALACIO ATARD (ed.), *De Hispania a España. El nombre y el concepto a través de los siglos*, Madrid, Temas de Hoy/Colegio Libre de Eméritos, 2005, pp. 137-150.

[22] Ángel J. MARTÍN DUQUE, "Sobre las fronteras hispano-cristianas hasta el siglo XI y sus singularidades pirenaico-occidentales", in: Luis RIBOT GARCÍA, Julio VALDEÓN BARUQUE, Ramón VILLARES PAZ (coords.), *Año mil, año dos mil. Dos milenios en la Historia de España*, Madrid, Sociedad Estatal España Nuevo Milenio, 2001, pp. 425-46.

civilizational project.[23] The elements of this project did not find the approval of the European civilization, and only to a small extend can they be traced back in the civilizational formula for both Iberian Americas.

The second example can be found at the opposite end of Europe. Since the 14th century these territories had witnessed the expansion to the east and south aimed at taking control over the whole *Intermarium* between the Baltic and the Black Sea. This expansion clashed with the Mongol, Tartar, and since 15th century Turkish ones. The political expression of this expansion was the Polish-Lithuanian state, which emerged from the Act of Union in 1569.[24] It anticipated the overseas European expansion of the 16th century and could be treated as an original civilizational project, which I would name "the Europe in the East". This project also anticipated the tendency of shaping Europe as a Core system, which is bound to dominate over the less developed Periphery.[25] Its outstanding feature was the co-existence of the Catholicism with the Orthodox faith, and acceptance of Islam and Judaism. The principle of the Agreement of the political nation and the legally guaranteed practice of religious peace (Warsaw Confederacy of 1573) formed the foundations for the creation of an original version of the European civilization.[26] I call this version a "Republic" by contrast to the empire.[27] Along with the Kingdom of

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[23] Henry KAMEN, *Imperio. La forja de España como potencia mundial*, Madrid, Aguilar, 2003.

[24] Jan KIENIEWICZ, *Historia de Polonia*, Mexico, FCE, 2001.

[25] It is a clearly different approach than that of Wallerstein and a significant part of the Polish historiography, which puts stress on the division of the continent between the West and the East, see for instance Marian MAŁOWIST, *Wschód a Zachód Europy w XIII-XVI wieku. Konfrontacja struktur społeczno-gospodarczych*, Warsaw, PWN, 1973.

[26] See also Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Ejes de integración, fronteras y divisiones de Sarmatia Europea", in: José MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN (dir.), *Felipe II 1527-1598. Europa y la Monarquía Católica*, t. I.1, Madrid, Parteluz, 1998, pp. 451-62.

[27] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Imperio y república frente a la ruptura de la Cristiandad", in: José MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN (coord.), *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa 1530-1558*, I, Madrid, Sociedad Estatal para

Hungary, the Polish-Lithuanian Republic formed, according to its own belief, *Antemurale Christianitatis*. Its last great manifestation was the victory of Vienna of Jan Sobieski in 1683.

A considerable part of the *Intermarium* territory consisted of the typical Borderland, where fights were constant, simultaneously with the commercial relations and the cultural exchange.[28] During a few centuries this process exerted a very strong impact on the Polish culture, conferring it strong Oriental features.[29] Since the 16th century the Polish-Lithuanian Republic had clashed on the same territory with the expansion of the Great Principality of Moscow, which gave origin to Russia. Since the reign of Peter the Great, Russia was a country, which has settled its own relations with Europe and with Turkey without the intermediary of Republic, and the latter gradually fell into dependence. The total elimination of the Polish statehood, as a result of the subsequent partitions (accomplished in 1795) meant the re-location of the scope of the Russian civilization to the West and the elimination of the Borderland. Since that time the development of the Russian civilization has always been directed against Europe and towards Europe, albeit always, also after the revolution of 1917, according to its own specific principles.[30]

Simultaneously since the 14th century the Turkish expansion spread over the Balkan Peninsula. It meant that the Christian societies, Orthodox and related to the Byzantine Empire were subdued by the Ottoman civilization. So gradually in the 16th century emerged also the southern border of Europe remaining under the control of the Turkish Empire. The specific elements of the Borderland can also be

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la conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2001, pp. 301-12.

[28] Feliks GROSS, "Kresy: The Frontier of Eastern Europe", *Polish Review,* XXIII/2, 1978.

[29] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Polish Orientalness", *Acta Poloniae Historic*, 49, 1984, pp. 67-103. This issue is later developed in *Spotkania Wschodu*, Gdańsk, Novus Orbis, 1999.

[30] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Russia's Route", in; Antoni KUKLIŃSKI (ed.), *European Space. Baltic Space. Polish Space*, Part Two, Warsaw, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Rewasz", 1997, pp. 248-56.

traced there. In the modern era on the former Borderland two great expansions of the emerging Empires divided between each other the Mediterranean Sea and interweaved into one political and economic world.[31]

There are different contemporary literary descriptions of the clash of expansions. My objective is to stress the importance of the Borderland as a place where the expansion was actually carried out. The Borderland is in no sense a no man's land located between two civilizations, for it always clearly states its sense of belonging, remaining in the same time open to the influence of alien cultures. As regards the more remote times, it would be worthwhile to ponder over the borderland of China and the world of the nomads, over the confrontation between the Tang dynasty and the Abbasids, over the movement of the Russian border eastwards and the domination over the Siberian cultures, over the borderland emerging between the Islamic and the Hindu world in Bengal[32], and finally over the limits of the Spanish conquest in the Andes.[33] However one can have reasonable doubts as to the correctness of applying this term to the Portuguese and Dutch political and economic structures, and then in relation to the British India in the 19th century.

In all these cases we are dealing with abrupt intrusions of people into the sphere of a different system. I apply the term of "Contact" in order to describe a situation, which requires that a system under attack should build new transformations, as a result of the

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[31] See also Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Del Báltico al Índico. Las nuevas fronteras hispánicas a finales del siglo XVI", in: Congreso Internacional *Las Sociedades Ibéricas y el mar a finales del siglo XVI*, II, *La monarquía. Recursos, organización y estrategias*, Lisboa, Sociedad Estatal Lisboa 98, 1998, pp. 385-402.

[32] Richard Maxwell EATON, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993.

[33] Álvaro JARA, *Guerre et société au Chili. Essai de sociologie coloniale. La transformation de la guerre d'Araucanie et l'esclavage des Indiens du début de la conquête espagnole aux débuts de l'esclavage légal (1612),* Paris, Insitut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine, 1961.

European expansion.[34] The use of the overwhelming, necessary to break the safety barriers of the other system, disrupts its organization and threatens its structures. I will not focus at the moment at the multiple versions of the effects of the Contact. I would like to underline that the reactions of systems to being overwhelmed by another may be extremely diverse, not only due to the differences of culture and religion, but also to the state of the relations with the environment. In many cases a proportionally insignificant external impulse may trigger off an avalanche of consequences leading to a modification of the structure or even to a catastrophe. The Contact basically meant two things: the establishment of the relation of domination/ subordination and the crossing of the border either sticking to or losing one's values. The Contact enforced adaptations, which could be carried out thanks to one's own informational resources, but more frequently proved to be non-autonomous. The subdued society re-gained the functional balance making reference in the structure of the dominant system. In this way the dependence was shaped. However it might occur that efficient opposition expressed itself by autonomous adaptations, or a temporary balance of forces. The origins can be traced also in the culture and in the efficiency of mobilized opposition. It requires to provide a more precise definition of the term of civilization.

Civilization as a sense of belonging to a system of values

Repetitive use of the term of "civilization" expresses, despite varying and unclear meanings, some important human need. People clearly search for some form that depicts the world, and seek explanations of the phenomena that go beyond their personal experience. Therefore a general tendency either to oppose the civilization to the culture or to identify the one with the other. The

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[34] Jan KIENIEWICZ, *Od ekspansji do dominacji. Próba teorii kolonializmu*, Warsaw, Czytelnik, 1986. Also "Early Travels to India: The Portuguese in Contact with the Alien Reality", *IV Seminário Internacional de História Indo-Portuguesa*, Lisboa, 1985, pp. 1-14; "The New European World Overseas: The Space of Contact and Limits of Cognition", *Acta Poloniae Historica*, LX, 1989, pp. 33-50.

culture and the religion contribute to the construction of the vision of the world, however they are not sufficient for its full comprehension and presentation. The civilizations are therefore basically such sets of social systems, which emerged when its representatives forged and then upheld the belief and the conviction that they belonged to a wider community than that defined by their particular group/social/ national/state bonds (tribes, peoples, nation, state), i.e. to a community wider than the limits of their own culture. Assuming the real existence of this kind of larger unities, I consider them to be imaginary, however I believe that they can be described and named even if the people forming part of them could not express it.

My conviction about the reality of inter-cultural relations does not suffice to determine the extend of identification of those who belong to Us, to the Others and who are Aliens. According to the European tradition a tendency to build hierarchical classifications, which took into account the real or supposed proximity, has always prevailed. The division of the mankind into different civilizations built upon the particular cultures proves a very useful, but not an exhaustive method.   If we consider the relations built between different social systems, we perceive the crucial role the communication plays in such cases. A question arises as to the capability of the human beings to take part in more than one communication system. An endeavour to build a communication system, either as a universal language or as a generally recognized signs system, is very common. It is beyond any doubt that it was and it remains strongly connected to the domination. The construction of a communication system reinforces the domination. The civilization is therefore about something more than just an identifying classification and the construction of a communication system.

I would like to complement, or even replace these conclusions by a statement, according to which the civilizations are systems of values. People of different cultures make the choice of the values, according to which they live and which shape their perception of the world, and by doing so, they transform them into systems. At first the values are included in the religions, but then they form their own structures. The Christiandom gave the European civilization Love, Truth and Freedom. The human dignity, the sanctity of human life,

justice or peace included among the Christian values, have gradually become European values.[35] One should also add the concern about the well-being of others, patience, humility, forgiveness and compassion.[36] As well as equality and solidarity. In the Hindu religion a similar set of values is composed of Kama, Dharma and Artha, which constitute the basis of the Indian system of values.[37]

The values originate from God, but are accepted and implemented by people in their life in an autonomous way. However it comes out that the set of values, which have been revealed and investigated in the religion, and then included by people in great amount of exegesis and testimonies, is gradually getting more and more human character. The values are said to be chosen when people apply them in practice, which means they live by them and they shape their perception of the world through them. I say so without undermining the importance of the culture. When people make choices, they implement the values into their life but they express them through their culture. However the latter only provides a way of expressing a sense of value. For it is not about any abstract choice, about any theoretical declaration, but about recognizing the values through giving testimony. It explains why the differentiation between the civilization and the culture proves so difficult. Therefore in the creation of the majority of classification systems the religion undoubtedly plays a crucial role.

Let us notice however that the intuition leading to the differentiation of Aliens, the theoretical conceptions standing behind

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[35] The Pope's message to the participants of the European Scientific Congress "Towards a European Constitution", dated to 20 of September 2002.

[36] See also Richard TARNAS, *The Passion of the Western Mind. Understanding the Ideas That Have Our World View*, Oxford, Harmony Books, 1991, p. 204 (acc. to the Polish edition). See also Dalmacio NEGRO, *Lo que Europa debe al Cristianismo*, Madrid, Unión Editorial, 2004.

[37] See also Maria Krzysztof BYRSKI, "The Indian Workshop of European Identity", in: Jan KIENIEWICZ (ed.), *Terra Marique. The Cultural Intercourse between the European Center and Periphery in Modern Time*, Warsaw, OBTA, 2001, pp. 105-25.

the classifications cannot be reduced just to the religion. It is linked to a problem of the values shaped by men. Thanks to freedom, man can make a free choice. He/she can also create values in the worldly, profane sphere. These values are ideas, products of human thought, which are believed to have similar features like the values. As a result the man is convinced that he/she is the creator of the values. A free man can reject the values and can also form the ideas, which have the form of anti-values. In the European civilization the opposition to one's own fundamental values is considered a value of its own.[38] The opposition to the European values presented as a universal set of standards were at the origin of the sense of identification of the Asian communities.

There is also another problem, that of the values, which are not commonly chosen (the hackneyed expression is "commonly accepted", however it does not seem accurate). One of these is human life. Alike secular tolerance, like the secularity itself, it comes from the Roman differentiation and confrontation between two spheres: the *sacrum* and the *profanum*. It is thus of paramount importance to perceive, that however the civilization is impossible without the religion, both notions are not identical. The civilization is thus a product of man, who makes choices and through these choices determines his/her status in a larger sense than the sense of belonging to an ethnic or national community. Moreover, the bonds, which are created by this choice, clearly do not form any specific community. One cannot build a nation on this basis. Therefore the empires vary from the civilizations.

The civilization is about a choice of the identification with the world of values. This choice is carried out by human beings and allows them to satisfy their need of identification above cultures. This act means exactly the same as taking consciousness of the basis of one's own existence. This choice is expressed by the culture. By choosing the values, which by definition are universal, we create a kind of community, whose common reference is the same culture. In Europe this kind of community is called a nation. The identification

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[38] Edgar MORIN, *Pensar Europa,* Barcelona, Gedisa, 1988.

with a particular world of values beyond the culture differences, seems not to be depending on religion. The Europe of many faiths remained Christian, however gradually and in specific circumstances, it could unite people of different religions. The religion in India does not have to necessarily divide, either.

While interpreting in this way the meaning of the civilization, I would like to point out how deeply is it rooted in the conduct and the choices of a man. It should not be limited to such artefacts of communities like the communication systems. On the contrary, it is up to the values to determine the level of communication between people belonging to different cultures. The sense of strangeness definitely means a total separateness of the alien system of values.

Human relations

The Borderland is a result of the expansion, and in particular of the confrontation of two systems aimed at extending their respective spectrum, and therefore it abounds in all kinds of human relations. In a fight or in a competition two separate systems of values clash, which means that they are revealed in the confrontation between two people. So we may also envisage the different principles standing behind the transmission of the messages. The European civilization shaped the form of *Dialogue* as the principal, perhaps specific to this civilization, kind of human relations. People maintaining a dialogue may also belong to different national communities. However dialogue would not be possible between people belonging to different civilizations, precisely because of different systems of values.[39] The modern world of the era of globalization does not erase any different systems of values, however the network of IT connections modifies the sense of

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[39] I hold about this issue a different opinion than the majority of the analysts of the contemporary era, who eagerly refer to "the dialogue between civilizations", see also Krzysztof GAWLIKOWSKI, "Dialogue Among Civilisations as a Challenge in The Era of Globalisation", in: Uichol KIM, Henriette Sinding AASEN and S. EBALDI (eds.), *Democracy, Human Rights and Islam in Modern Iran: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives*, Rafto Human Rights Series, vol. II, Oslo, 2003, pp. 411-42.

distance in human relations. It does not eliminate the real relations, but it creates a completely novel value, which makes it possible to go beyond the frontiers and cause effects in other parts of the world without moving. This difference should be taken into consideration in the analysis of the different past civilizations.

In the 19th and 20th centuries great numbers of the Europeans found themselves playing different roles in the Asian countries, surrounded by the representatives of another civilization. Most frequently, albeit not always, they held the power. In the 21st century we can witness a far more massive presence of the people of other civilizations in Europe. Generally they have come here to look for better living conditions. The problem of human migrations and covering distances remains the same, although it gives rise to different situations. Nevertheless the question is still unchanged: what kind of relations can develop between people belonging to different civilizations? I consider that there are basically two types of relations. In the colonial-style situation we can encounter the relation of domination, in the circumstances of the contemporary migration, instead of the assimilation, we may see the refusal to participate. The reaction in the first case was submission, and in the second is withdrawal.

Therefore we should differentiate the situation of two social systems who are characterized by a different model of civilizational status. We are quite well aware of the reality caused by the European expansion, which led in the 19th and 20th centuries to the formation of the domination/submission relation. Nowadays the relations are more complex and require a totally different description. We are accustomed to talk frequently about crossing "the civilizational borders". It is a rather vague expression, but it refers generally to an easily grasped sense of cultural difference. However as a matter of fact the issue is far more complex. In the colonial era those who found themselves surrounded by Foreigners did not cease to be themselves, which means that they kept on living according to their own sets of values. They participated in the expansion, considering obvious the fact they should remain within the scope of their civilization. So did they re-locate the borders of their own civilization, obviously the European one, or did they enter the sphere of a Alien civilization, such

as the Indian? We can notice immediately how outside Europe, following the expansion, and therefore the domination, emerged the colonialism.[40] It is a specific kind of dependence, in which the dependant recognizes the supremacy of the dominant. As regards the functioning of the social system it meant the interiorization of the subordination and a recourse to the structures of the dominant system in the process of transformation. These modifications were obviously to be found at the level of individuals. The dependant were also enslaved and even their protest took on the forms borrowed from the dominant structures. It seems therefore that this complex phenomenon must have exerted a deep impact upon their systems of values. However we tend to automatically assume that the European expansion was also the expansion of the European civilization, in an effort to confer it some universal character. That is why it was then assumed that only this one deserved the name of the civilization.

In my researches on the expansion and the colonialism I had taken for granted that the social systems create spheres, which refer to real territories. If we now look at the issue from the point of view of of the relation between two people who claim that they belong to different systems of values, and who are located in the same place, we can design a kind of matrix, showing situations resulting from crossing the limits of one's own civilization. I have thought it would be tantamount with making a question about the choice and fulfilment of the particular system of values.

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[40] The proposed approach to colonialism as a non-autonomous transformation of the submitted system differs considerably from the ideas presented by Edward W. SAID, *Cultura e imperialismo*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 1996.

	types of human relations		DEPENDANT SOCIETY	
	Submission	*Domination*	People stick to their values	People reject their values and accept foreign values
DOMINANT SOCIETY	People stick to their values		ENCOUNTER	**CONTACT**
				RULE/ SUPREMACY / *IMITATION*
	People reject their values and accept foreign values		**CONTACT**	**CATASTROPHY**
			ACCOMODATION / *REJECTION*	

Fig. 2. Crossing of the civilizational borders[41].

I will now consider the entrance of people on the foreign land and into the foreign space, which led to the interference in the sphere of the organization and in the structure of the attacked, and subsequently dependant social system. From the point of view of the dominant society the Contact leads to the establishment of the rule, which means the acknowledgement of its supremacy. Nevertheless an efficient opposition can compel the newly arrived to accommodate. For the dependant society the Contact gives rise to the conducts of imitation, however in certain circumstances also to the rejection of alien models. Therefore all depends upon the way people treat their

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[41] This diagram was designed for the needs of the research project "The silent intelligentzia: a study of the civilizational oppression" launched by OBTA centre at the University of Warsaw. It has been described in J. KIENIEWICZ, *El sistema de los valores...*, op. cit.

own systems of values. I would thus define the essence of colonialism as a submission based on the acknowledgement of the supremacy of the ruling system and I differentiate it both from serfdom and slavery. The people involved in the colonial relation belong to different civilizations, and the constant crossing of the civilizational border, makes them face the problem of maintaining their own civilizational identity.

The proposed scheme shows that along with various versions of the Contact we can see two possible ways. One of them can be considered a secondary, although typical, aberration. It is the *horror* of the treason. The rejection of the system of values may mean, like it used to mean in the colonial times, that crossing the border did not provide any guarantee of finding oneself on the other side. If we endeavour to understand the sense of the Kurtz' s treason, we should ponder over our requirement that those who nowadays come to us from the *Heart of Darkness* should abandon their own values.[42]

I use this literary expression to embrace all the colonial world, where the Encounter proved impossible. It was also due to the destruction of the bonds and the coordinates, which made possible the spacial expression of identity. In the circumstances of the Borderland we can find a parallel under the form of *renegade*. A dissenter from his values could count upon a career, however was met with condemnation. It is worth wondering how we should classify the conduct of the contemporary "Westerners", who do not find enough motivation to stick to their own system of values in the face of the new-comers?

I have given to the second possible way the name of the Encounter, due to the analogy to the situation described by Kipling in his *Ballade of East and West*. Two men, who have come from two

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[42] The essence of evil does not consist in the African darkness, but in the specific for colonialism's loss of values. See also Robert HAMPSON, "Introduction" to Joseph CONRAD, *Heart of Darkness with The Congo Diary*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, p. XXXIV. And also Robert Francis LEE, *Conrad's colonialism*, The Hague, Mouton, 1969.

different ends of the world, are capable of standing face to face, because they are strong with their sense of identity ("They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault"), somehow they mutually acknowledge their readiness to compete. This colonial scene refers to the Indian-Afghan borderland and includes a mythical element. Still it does reflect the reality.[43] This situation also includes an indication, because as the Encounter takes place within the range of a particular civilization, it suggests that the maintenance of the values is more needed than its rejection. By the way, the borderland between India and Afghanistan, inhabited by the tribes of the highlanders, had its own system of reference values. And from their point of view there could be no question of Borderland. The Englishmen accepted the Indian point of view and simultaneously followed the Mogol tradition, who no treated Afghanistan as foreign territory.

I would like to extrapolate this experience to the reality of the European borderland. I have not used the terms coined through the research on the colonialism and the imperialism to describe the examples mentioned before. I consider that despite great differences, the essence of the processes here and there was the same. Both sides at certain moments went beyond their respective spheres and tried to impose their domination. On both sides an imposed submission and accommodation could be noticed. The only distinctive feature is the duration of the border. And therefore the vividness of the imagery of Borderland among the inhabitants –or, to say it better– among its participants.

So we can undoubtedly talk about the parallels, cases of Contact and domination in regard to the European societies. In our consciousness the fact of being subdued to the ruling Aliens is perceived as degrading. Therefore we forged a conviction that all subordinated societies are of non-European character. It can be easily demonstrated on the example of the prejudices about the inhabitants

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[43] Thomas R. METCALF, *Ideologies of the Raj. The New Cambridge History of India*, III. 4, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 145.

of the Iberian or Balkan Peninsulas. Such a tendency is still more vivid in the space of the Eastern borderland, where following the European expansion expressed in the 15th and 16th centuries by the creation on the Ruthenian land of the important union of states under the form of the Polish-Lithuanian Republic, since the 17th century has come the era of the Russian expansion. When Russia took into possession the territories previously included within the range of the European civilization, it did not became part of Europe. On the other hand the population of the territories under the control of Russia, for instance after 1815 started to be perceived in the West as non-Europeans, despite the declarations of faithfulness to its system of values. No less vividly could the same problem be seen after 1945, when the Soviet Union spread its control as far as to the Elba river.[44]

Encounter as a variant of inter-civilizational relation

When we ponder over the inter-civilizational relations, we seem to focus on the European expansion and this one-sidedness causes some over-simplifications in our interpretations. In order to establish the character of the human relations between people living in different systems of values we had to recognize the complexity of the expansion.[45] The next move should lead us towards a more universal approach to the question. It is not only about liberating ourselves from the dispute about the European guilt or merit. The Turkish conquests in the Balkan Peninsula are not being considered in the similar way as the Spanish or French conquests in America or in Asia. The process of Russia re-location towards the centre of Europe between the 18th and the 20th centuries is also treated differently to the colonial expansion. By the way, the former is probably the only example of an expansion, which is not perceived in Europe in terms of colonialism. It may only be understood given that indeed the Russian rule was not always

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[44] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Del Báltico al Mar Negro: "Intermarium" en la política europea", *Política Exterior*, 61, 1998, pp. 59-73.
[45] Michael Naylor PEARSON, *Before Colonialism. Theories on Asian-European Relations 1500-1750*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1988, above all pp. 55-56. It is a good introduction to slightly futile, albeit witty polemics between I. Wallerstein and A.G. Frank.

accompanied by the submission of its new subjects. However it can be easily proved that for example in the Poland under partitions a reluctance to confer a colonial status to Russia was a result of a willingness to put aside a theory about a lower, non-European status of the Poles. In order to check the hypothesis about colonial domination in Poland in the 19th century, the first step should be to put into consideration the level of submission. An attempt to theoretically approach this question should include finding a common denominator to all different situations.[46]

In the 16th and 17th centuries it existed a consciousness of the expansion carried out by the Polish-Lithuanian Republic eastwards and southwards, and even parallels were drawn with the Spanish conquests in America. The Russian expansion in the Siberia was compared with the American advance towards the Pacific Ocean. For various reasons the civilizational aspects have not been taken into account. Therefore I would like to underline that from the territories of the Eastern European borderland it seems to emerge more an image of a balance of all involved forces. It is a well known phenomenon as regards the inter-penetration of cultures, with Oriental influences in Poland and Polish impact in Moscow. The human relations are less taken into consideration, because it predominates a vision of either a domination of one side (for instance that of the Polish element) or of a supposed synthesis of both. However two important facts should be noticed. In the Eastern Europe all the events are taking place in the sphere dominated by the European civilization, albeit mostly by the Polish attempt to build its own European project in the East. That means that the expansion consisted in building the legal and the social foundations for the accepted and interiorized system of values. The authenticity of this expansion was expressed precisely by the fact that, alike for instance the Portuguese one, it did not formulate any

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[46] A good example is an attempt to apply the Said's conception to the Russian expansion, and consequently to apply the term of colonialism to the/each relation domination/submission (Russia/Poland). Ewa M. THOMPSON, *Imperial Knowledge. Russian Literature and Colonialism*, London, Greenwood Press, 2000, from p. 122 of the Polish edition. However both have a slightly different approach to the colonial issue.

civilizational mission. The expansion was expressed by the
modification of the way of life, extension of range, within the limits of
which people used to refer to the same values. Moreover they referred
to the values typically considered as Polish.

This activity defined a border, which was on the other hand
shaped by military pressures, but also a certain conception of the
world that stood behind it. The Borderland I am interested in is a part
of Europe.[47] However it remained until the end of the 20th century a
separate world, which was not a copy. Therefore the word for
Borderland in Polish bears the pregnant with meaning name of the
Land's Ends (*Kresy*). The peripheral approach to these territories
under the rule of the Habsburgs and the Romanov's should take into
account the catastrophe, which undermined the hypothetical chances
of the Encounter. The mythology, which was built around the
confrontation of different cultures, and sometimes alien civilization, is
an important element of this process. However it has never been under
such scrutiny.[48]

In this perspective one should notice the inter-penetration and
the settlement on the Borderland of people of different civilizations,
such as the Armenians, the Tartars and the Jews. The latter group had
already been present there for a long time and can be seen as the best
example of the balance between two systems of values. They were not
subdued and they should not be considered as victims of oppression.
They had come looking for better life conditions than in other
European countries or Turkey. On the Ruthenian land, predominantly
inhabited by the followers of the Orthodox church, they were not

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[47] Jan KIENIEWICZ, "How to rebuild European Borderlands", in:
Options of Enlargement of the European Union, ed. H. ELSENHANS, Leipzig
1999, p. 100-10. Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Borderlands as Spaces for the Encounter
of Worlds", in: *Terra Marique*... op. cit., pp. 146-58.

[48] J.R. KRZYŻANOWSKI, "A Paradise Lost? The Image of Kresy in
Contemporary Polish Literature", in: *American Contribution to the 8th
International Congress of Slavists*, 2, Columbus, Slavica Publishers, 1978,
pp. 391-421. Daniel Beauvois in a few studies ponders over the question of
the real meaning of this Polish mythology, see *Pouvoir russe et noblesse
polonaise en Ukraine 1793-1830*, Paris, CNRS, 2003.

much liked. They were considered as involved in some sort of an arrangement with the nobility and therefore they were occasionally persecuted during the Cossack uprisings. An exchange of information and signs between the Christian and the Jewish communities in the Polish-Lithuanian state was carried out on the basis of mutual balance, despite obvious political domination of the nobility. It took the form of a separate, albeit much different to the European conventional model: without ghettos and persecutions. It had very deep effects. This process, neither tolerant, nor harmonious, was based on the co-existence of both communities next to each other but separately. One cannot talk about Dialogue, but about an Encounter. The relations between the Orthodox Ruthenian population and the Catholic Polish population could be analysed in a similar way. In this case there were mutual influences and exchanges, due to the common Christian foundation and more importantly to the offer of choice to the upper classes provided by the Republic of nobles. We can also notice an interesting example of the co-existence of the Muslim community with the Christian neighbours. It is all the more interesting because the Tartar population settling mostly on the Borderland of the Polish-Lithuanian state descended from war prisoners. During the centuries they become polonized but they maintained their faith. The Polish Muslims quite quickly came to form part of the European world. In all these cases the inter-civilizational relations implied the absorption of the Aliens and not their submission by oppression.

For a long time the Eastern and Southern borderland could be characterized by a military balance. Since the end of the 17th century Turkey ceased to be a threat. The three-centuries-long conflict had shaped the relations between people of not only different cultures, but also religions and both the situations of imposed oppression and those of accommodation. The borderland witnessed free exchange of material goods and aesthetic models. It was possible due to the strong accent on freedom. People encountered communication barriers, but as long as they stuck to their values, they created a state of balance, which ensured the respect of the difference.

The same problem takes on a different aspect today, when people of other civilization come to Europe not as conquerors, but in the search for work. They do not create any domination, but they do

not submit, either. The issue has been treated in the post-colonial terms, as a continuation of the exploitation. However we are faced with a process of huge importance, because the new-comers, mainly the Muslims, do not accept neither the culture, nor the system of values of the countries in which they settle. It cannot be excluded that a state of tension due to the lack of the assimilation of the Muslim population is connected precisely with the breakdown of the European civilization. The model of Encounter demands above all the respect for one's own values.

The Encounter is a situation of balance between the mutual impacts of two communities. Such a case is possible when the external impulses do not cause any structural modifications in the system, which is the object of expansion. The system carrying out the expansion also does not undergo any modifications of its identity. A relation of confrontation can be established, which gives rise to the communication, despite the difference of codes. It takes on the form of an exchange of goods and information of certain importance in many aspects of life, which, however, does not lead to the establishment of the relation of domination/subordination. Encounters happened in Europe during periods of defence against foreign expansion: Arabic or Turkish, and momentarily also in Asia during the European expansion.[49] It is a relation based on the maintenance of one's own values in the face of the confrontation. If we consider the issue from the civilizational point of view, we will notice that in reality it is a relation between people with different senses of belonging. In the case when one system dominates and the other is subdued, but not submissive, concrete individuals maintain their

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[49] I consider such possibility in Malabar between the 16th and 18th centuries, where the European powers (Portuguese and Dutch) did not impose a political or economic domination. However the local Christian community established relations with the new comers from Europe. See also Jan KIENIEWICZ, "Cristãos e especiaria: The Portuguese Impact on the Malabar Christian Community", in: Pius MALEKANDATHIL, Jamal MOHAMMED (eds.), *The Portuguese, Indian Ocean and European Bridgeheads 1500-1800*, Tellichery, Insitute for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities of MESHAR, 2001, pp. 119-132.

systems of values. Or rather are able to stick to it.

We derive the force necessary to face and in the same time to open oneself to the other person from the relation with God. On the inter-personal level the Encounter would be an equivalent of the Dialogue (a relation of two people belonging to the same civilization), as a relation of two subjects referring to different systems of values, who occupy balanced position in the same civilizational space. The models we have presented are useful for the interpretation of the empirical research. Therefore we can assume that the Encounter is a relation of two people with different identities and different senses of belonging. What is most striking in this relation is the difference between each of them, their autonomy despite the confrontation and a fundamental communication problem. And a conclusion the Encounter may be analysed as a set of real or imagined relations between two social systems, however always showing respect to one's own identity and the identity of the Other. During a period of domination this situation scarcely occurred. It happened more frequently in the period preceding the colonial expansion. On the basis of these historical examples we can notice that it had nothing to do with an attempt to settle a compromise or a synthesis. It was rather about enriching oneself as a result of the confrontation.