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Adam F. Kola

Institute of Slavonic Philology, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland

e-mail: adamkola@umk.pl

Eastern, Central, or East-Central Europe? Identity Dilemmas in Contemporary Poland

Abstract: Poland, from the United States' perspective, is the matter of Eastern Europe, while for Western Europe it constitutes eastern borders of European Union. In turn, Polish neighbors – the Czechs (J. Krouťvor, M. Kundera, J. Křen, etc.) – are attached to the concept of Central Europe, what in the 1980s and 1990s found many followers in Poland. However, at present, the opinion that Poland is situated in East-Central Europe predominates in this country. All these terms bear various traditions and evoke different connections. Firstly, the objective of this paper is to show in what manner Central and East-Central Europe is perceived in Poland, secondly – to point at cultural and historical background and socio-political meaning of particular ideas. Since all these notions are casual and conditioned both politically and historically, and they also correspond with affairs of certain political, business and academic groups. What is more, ideas hidden behind these notions are intellectual constructs and as such they are often subjected to manipulations. In this context there are at least two pivotal questions: how these heritages form the present Polish identity? What kind of author's strategies of contriving the problems mentioned above are possible? In the paper I will take into consideration different discourses in comparison, among the others historical/historiographical (Halecki, Kłoczowski, Wandycz, Piotrowski), cultural "activists" or "the practitioners of ideas" (Giedroyc, Czyżewski) and writers (Miłosz, Stasiuk). The paper is extension of my recent book *Europa w dyskursie polskim, czeskim i chorwackim. Rekonfiguracje krytyczne [Europe in Polish, Czech and Croatian Discourse. Critical Reconfigurations, Toruń 2011]* where I focus on transnational dimensions of the category of "Europe", whereas herein I would like to take a step backwards to the Polish context, but with a deeper interpretation in junction with the problem of identity in the society in transition.

Keywords: Eastern Europe, Central Europe, East-Central Europe, Identity, Poland.

Eastern, Central, or East-Central Europe? Identity Dilemmas in Contemporary Poland¹

Poland is situated in Europe. This simple ascertainment still brings along many problems. General consent prevails as regards the place of Poland on the map of Europe, whereas specifying what Europe we exactly mean is difficult. Poland, from the United States' perspective, is the matter of Eastern Europe, while for Western Europe it constitutes eastern borders of European Union.² In turn, Polish neighbors – the Czechs – are attached to the concept of Central Europe, what in the 1980s and 1990s found many followers in Poland. However, at present, the opinion that Poland is situated in East-Central Europe predominates in this country. All these terms bear various traditions and evoke different connections. Firstly, the objective of this text is to show in what manner Central and East-Central Europe is perceived in Poland, secondly – to point at cultural and historical background and socio-political meaning of particular ideas. Since all these notions are casual and conditioned both politically and historically, and they also correspond with affairs of certain political, business and academic groups. What is more, ideas hidden behind these notions are intellectual constructs and as such they are often subjected to manipulations. In this context there are at least two pivotal questions: how these heritages form the present Polish identity? What kind of author's strategies of contriving the problems mentioned above are possible?

In this place brief terminological notice is worth making. The notion being used here (with and without hyphen) "East-Central Europe" or "East Central Europe" [*Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia*] has already established position in the Polish humanities and it also forces its way into academic salons of Anglo- and Franco-phone worlds, first and foremost, at the instance of Piotr Wandycz (born 1923) and Jerzy Kłoczowski (born 1924)³. However, other terms also may be found: "Central-Eastern Europe" [*Europa Środkowowschodnia*]⁴, used sometimes also by Kłoczowski⁵ or "Central and Eastern Europe" [*Europa Środkowa i Wschodnia*]⁶. The same case is with the notion "Central Europe" [*Europa Środkowa*] (more unusually "central Europe" [*Europa środkowa*] e.g. by Milan Kundera), which sometimes is used interchangeably with "Central Europe" [*Europa Centralna*] or also "Europe of the Center/center" [*Europa Środka/środk*]⁷, and sometimes even "middle-continent" [*Śródkontynent*]⁸. However, here a relative consent also predominates, and the first of mentioned spellings, that is "Central Europe" [*Europa Środkowa*] prevails⁹.

The concept of East Central Europe is connected with Polish historiography and socio-political idea. It was proposed by Polish WW II emigrant in the United States, Oskar Halecki (1891-1973)¹⁰. East-Central Europe – according to him – is situated "between Sweden, Germany, and Italy, on the one hand, and Turkey and Russia on the other"¹¹. However, it should be emphasized that Halecki speaks of Europe's division into four parts:

Western, West-Central, East-Central and Eastern. He does not speak sometimes about East Central Europe; likewise in case of West Central Europe, but about eastern (respectively: western) part of Central Europe. The last one is understood here in the way analogous to that conceived by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1837). According to Halecki, we have one Central Europe split into two parts: “western – including German [speaking] countries, whereas eastern, as a matter of fact, includes independent countries between the Soviet Union from one side, and Scandinavia, Germany and Italy from the other side.”¹²

However, why Halecki, already from American perspective, did not use the term perhaps more convenient – “Eastern Europe”? The objective was clear. That was to show Russia, because it was the matter in question, as the state connected with Asia, which became a synonym of wildness, barbarity. Asia, understood in this way, is an opposition to Europe, to which Poland and other countries of East-Central Europe belong. On the one hand we can find positioning of Poland between the East and the West, but on the other hand we notice constant emphasizing, that we are a part of the Western civilization. The ambivalence is inscribed into Polish political, historical, philosophical, and also historiographic discourse. That is distinctly different from the perspective of Czechs, to which relation with the West was obvious and never controvertible. Because Poland still copes with its eastern visage, which is on the one hand attractive inasmuch as it fascinates with oriental riches and uncontrollable space, however, but on the other hand wild and repulsive, since not European. Orientalization, about which Edward W. Said was writing, became perfectly internalized in Polish culture, whereas in 19th century, in the period of partitions, the memory of this process was repressed effectively enough, that this oriental trait became entirely forgotten. In the same time they lost the real political consequence, entering the domain of myths, creating borderland legend – the collective memory and imagination of Poles, which is alive till the present day. Polish Europe seen from historical and social perspective, in the optics of so called national culture should be rather East-Central than Central.

According to contemporary authors the region of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealths should be understood under the term East-Central Europe. Czech, Slovakia and Hungary, and moreover Silesia, Red (Halych) Ruthenia, the region of contemporary Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, then the region of the former State of Teutonic Order (i. e. East Pomerania as far as Prussia and Livonia, i.e. the regions of contemporary Latvia and Estonia) Croatia and Transylvania, are also readily included into this space¹³. Kłoczowski often applies the notions of Central Europe, East-Central Europe and sometimes Central-eastern Europe. He makes the following statement: “by Central-eastern Europe” we mean the countries between the Adriatic Sea and the Baltic Sea, which ultimately during the 10th-11th centuries took the position within the Western Christian, Latin circle¹⁴. In his writings, the South-Eastern Europe (Croatia, Slovenia), the West-Central or the Northern-European circle (Latvia, Estonia) are included into the East-Central Europe. Therefore it stretches out from Estonia in the North to Croatia in the South.

In turn, Wandycz emphasizes that within this term may come either (1) the region extended “between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea”¹⁵ (contiguous to ethnically German and ethnically Russian countries) and in this sense he comes close to the concept of Kłoczowski, or (2) the core¹⁶ of this region – i.e. Poland, Czechs, Slovakia (or Czechoslovakia) and Hungary. His works are theoretically devoted to these four countries, however, the terrains of contemporary Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and also a part of the former Yugoslavia (the matter of concern are here, we should think, Croatia and Slovenia) and Romania. Connections with Austria and the House of Habsburg¹⁷ – and in this extent the idea comes closer to Czechs’ and Slovakian Central Europe – also should not be left out of account. Therefore, Wandycz’s East-Central Europe constitute terrains of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Austria- Hungary.

The appearance of Milan Kundera (born 1929) in the 80’s of 20th century, strongly corresponding with standpoints outlined above, is not without importance. The idea of Central Europe (not East-Central), constantly present in Czech culture in the 19th and the 20th centuries¹⁸, constitutes a base for Kundera’s concept of Central Europe and is an attempt to overcome postwar division of the continent into Eastern Europe (communist) and Western one (democratic). According to Kundera, who, when speaking of Central Europe as the region of small nations situated between Germany and Russia, the Jews are *par excellence* small nation. It can be seen not only in essays of Czech-French writer, but also in works of Czech historians, in which the Jewish nation has its special, distinguished place¹⁹. Kundera describes accurately Central Europe in one more way. It is the territory without clearly defined borders. “It would be senseless to try to draw its borders exactly, because Central Europe is not a state: it is a culture or fate.” Therefore, as the author of *Unbearable Lightness of Being* says “its borders are imaginary and must be drawn and redrawn with each new historical situation” (Kundera 1984: 23)²⁰. In the 80’s of 20 century the Kundera’s essay resounded with large response in opposition circles, and its anti-soviet inference fully coincided with anti-communist movements. Hence, no wonder that strength, influence and popularity of these texts have remained great till the present day.

Casual changes of terms – when it is convenient – and using the notion of Central Europe by Polish authors may be explained with that. In this case, they do not refer to their master – Halecki, but to the author, which is better known and more distinguishable in modern times – Kundera. The rhetoric and persuasive power of the text prevails, in this case, over faithfulness to tradition and the concept’s coherence.

What is the origin of the ambivalent attitude towards the term “Central Europe” in Poland, where, on the one hand we can observe full devotion to this idea, but then, in contrast, reluctance to it and propagating “East-Central Europe”? Kłoczowski points to the fact, that the notion of Central Europe underlies the German term *Mitteleuropa*, which served German expansion in the first half of the 20th century. Nevertheless, he entirely forgets of Czech (Habsburg, indeed, but yet Czech within the multinational monarchy) tradition to speak about

Central Europe. In Kłoczowski's opinion the term "East-Central Europe" seems to be preferable. He sets forth several arguments in favor of such solution. The first one, "East-Central Europe" clearly separates from German Friedrich Neumann's *Mittleuropa* from the beginning of 20th century²¹, particularly from the World War I period, which would have been successively realized once again by the III Reich of Adolf Hitler²². Secondly, Kłoczowski yet points at the „centrality” of these areas, and that distinctly emphasizes relation with culture of Western Europe. The statement of reasons is self-separation from Russia-Eurasia. Thirdly, he brings into relief exceptionality of these terrains and underlines their own place on “the current and historical maps of European space”²³. Together with that, the fact, that the author does not discuss the second element of the name – “eastern” must be astounding. At least two meanings should be related to it. Perceiving Russia as Asia has had long tradition in Poland and usually pejorative meaning. E.g. the philosopher Wincenty Lutosławski (1863-1954) posed that Russians are Turan race, therefore of Asiatic origin and they remain savage, whereas Poles belong to Aryan race²⁴. In turn, already, as early as, in 19th century the philosopher, pedagogue, and messianist Bronisław Trentowski (1808-1869) alleged, that “Russian intellect is Tartarian, Asiatic”²⁵. However, Kłoczowski presently, owing to the element “centrally” evades classifying his Europe as a part of Russia or Asia, and negative associations, which the East awakes in Polish tradition.

Jerzy Giedroyc (1906-2000) must have understood requirement of reciprocal understanding in East-Central Europe. Together with Juliusz Mieroszewski he drew up the conception of necessity for Poland's independence, the existence of sovereign states of Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus (ULB). Russian domination in the area of ULB is a permanent threat for Poland. It was he, who after 1989 pointed at the need of building a new relationships with the neighbors of Poland instead of pondering over the past. The idea transferred into the field of politics brings practical results.

Different strategy is suggested by one of the best contemporary Polish writers and simultaneously the traveler around sparsely frequented routes in that part of Europe – Andrzej Stasiuk (born 1960). He does not seek solutions possible for political application, nor does he propose new international relationship model for the states of the former Eastern Block. His strategy both, as a traveler and a writer is different. His look is by his program not only idiosyncratic, but first and foremost, private one. Analogically to liberal thinking, he distinguishes public-political sphere and private one, which encompasses convictions of religious character, hence he is not interested in common Central Europe, but in his own, individual.

There is, however, another option – the third way between Giedroyc and Stasiuk, represented in contemporary discourse on this part of Europe by Krzysztof Czyżewski (born 1958). He leads the Center “Pogranicze” (*Borderland*) in Sejny – North Eastern Poland, close to Lithuania border, which is engaged, among others, in publishing books from this part of Europe (or concerning it). Czyżewski's Europe extends from the Baltic states, with particular love to Wilno (Lit. Vilnius), whereas southward it reaches Kosovo and Albania. Traveling this route we have on the way all former Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth, the Habsburg Monarchy and former Turkish properties in Europe. The category of borderland is, however, crucial to Czyżewski. Central Europe is borderland Europe: borderlands of arts, cultures, nations, religions, history. Central Europe – according to Czyżewski²⁶, but also e.g. to Danilo Kiš – becomes sunken Atlantis.²⁷ Therefore, if Central Europe is to exist, a traveler must discover unknown lands, lost civilizations, mark out new trails. Central Europe is really functioning spiritual space, where the past (lost civilization²⁸ of Atlantis, and traces of the vanished glory), the presence (with its problems, destruction, oblivion, wars, collapses) and the future (hoping for positive change, with prepared program of this change) meet. The identity of contemporary man of Central Europe is continued on the vertexes of a triangle drawn like this. Lack of rootedness, lack of prospects for present days, lack of hope for future draw a picture of Central European man (like Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*), as someone, who is suspended in the mid-air, in eternal nowhere, “here, that is to say, nowhere,” looking for his righteous place²⁹.

Most forthright intensions, will of agreement between (sometimes being in conflict) parties, may not lead to desired results. The obstacles standing in the way to them include different traditions, various semantic misinterpretations concerning particular terms or incompatible expectations and political interests. Therefore, the reception of the discussed idea among Poland's neighbors is worth attention.

Despite Polish authors' declarations, that e.g. Czechs are the part of East-Central Europe, it is difficult to convince them, that it is a fact, indeed. Jan Křen relates this Czechs and Czech language's indisposition towards Halecki's term (*East Central Europe, Ostmitteleuropa, Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia*) to the period of Soviet domination³⁰.

The Czechs and Slovaks do not feel connection with nations of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth eastern borderlands. The more so, because Milan Kundera, who had a strong impact on our and Czechs' vision on Central Europe, in his conception clearly separated himself from Russia. As it seems, when we add to those opinions still strong tradition referring to Masaryk and the epigones of both cited authors, it turns out, that they had substantial impact on the way the Czechs look at Central Europe. Paradoxically, also the Russians express their negative attitude towards the idea of East-Central Europe, seeing in it – not quite without reason – Polish imperial attempts.

Finishing his *Introduction* to the book *Historii Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej (History of East-Central Europe)* Kłoczowski states, that this part of Europe should be recognized, because it is a key for understanding Europe as whole, it is open to the East and to the West, and last but not least, it is a bridge connecting these two, so often divided elements. In this context, it is also significant, that eminent Czech historian, politician, co-author and the main propagator of Austroslavism František Palacký in his work *Dějiny národu českého v*

Čechách a na Moravě placed the Czechs in the “center and heart of Europe” and he claimed, that it was geographical situation, what determined the course of Czech history. He also compared Czech role in Europe to a bridge connecting the East with the West.

Similar opinions are constantly heard in reference to the Balkans. Probably every region historically and politically separated claims to itself the credit for such a special role. On the one hand, it must not be taken too seriously, as it is a common, universal tendency. On the other hand, however, it should be remembered, that it is necessary for defining its own identity. Thinking this way it is always worth defending one’s own conception and promote one’s own originality. And Polish identity – however would we stave off and resist, with eyes fixed on Old Europe, intensively escape from Russia – may probably always remain torn between the East and the West.

Adam F. Kola, is an assistant professor and deputy director of the Institute of Slavonic Philology, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland. In 2011 he published the book *Europe in Polish, Czech and Croatian Discourse: Critical Reconfiguration* (in Polish with English summary), and in 2004 *Czech and Russian Slavophilism in Comparison* (in Polish). Co-editor with Andrzej Szahaj of the book *Philosophy and Ethics of Interpretation* in 2007 (in Polish). He is the author of more than 50 papers in the Polish, Czech, Russian and English languages. Numerous scholarships including: Visiting Scholar at the Harriman Institute of Columbia University, postdoctoral scholarship in Czech Republic, as well as other fellowships in Slovenia and Croatia. He got numerous stipends from the Foundation for Polish Science. In 2011 he was inaugural session participant of the Institute for World Literature organized by Harvard University. More information on his personal webpage: <http://torun-pl.academia.edu/AdamFKola>

¹ This text is a draft of a paper on this topic. It is a work-in-progress and aims to signal the important problems related to the topic. See more: Adam F. Kola, *Europa w dyskursie polskim, czeskim i chorwackim. Rekonfiguracje krytyczne* (Toruń: UMK, 2011).

² Historical roots of such understanding of this part of Europe as Eastern, see: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

³ Jerzy Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa. Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w kręgu cywilizacji chrześcijańskiej średniowiecza* (Warszawa: PIW, 1998); Piotr Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (2nd ed., London-New York: Routledge, 2001).

⁴ Krzysztof Baczkowski and Janusz Smółucha, eds., *Europa Środkowowschodnia od X do XVIII wieku – jedność czy różnorodność* (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2005).

⁵ Jerzy Kłoczowski, “Wprowadzenie”, in *Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski, vol. 1 (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2000).

⁶ Krzysztof Pomian, *Europa i jej narody* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz – terytoria, 2004).

⁷ See: Witold Gombrowicz, *Dzienniki 1957-1961* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997); Andrzej Stasiuk, *Opowieści galicyjskie* (Wołowiec: Czarne, 2001). Nevertheless, one notice referring to interpretation of these terms should be made. In Polish language expressions *Europa Centralna* and *Europa Środkowa* (*centrum* or *środek* are in Polish equivalents) are distinguishable, whereas in English this differentiation dissolves in one term “Central Europe”. Analogous situation is in other Slavic languages, e.g. in Czech.

⁸ Andrzej Tyszką, “Rodzimość i uniwersalizm śródkontynentu”, in *Róża wiatrów Europy. O środkowoeuropejskiej tożsamości kulturowej*, eds. Andrzej Tysza (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 1999), 133-142.

⁹ Works of Robin Okey (*Central Europe / Eastern Europe: Behind the Definitions*, “Past and Present”, N° 137, *The Cultural and Political Construction of Europe*, Nov. 1992: 102-133) or Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (*Towards a History of the Literary Cultures in East-Central Europe: Theoretical Reflections*, New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 2002), though extraordinarily valuable in drawing out an outline of some terminological settlements pointing at the background of particular concepts, nevertheless they can pose merely fragmentary contribution to more regular work, that has been initially outlined hereunder; see: Kola, *Europa w dyskursie*.

¹⁰ It appeared for the first time in 1935 when Hungarian historians started issuing academic annual titled *Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis*; see: Kłoczowski “Wprowadzenie”, 10.

¹¹ Oscar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization. A History of East-Central Europe* (Simon Publications, 2000), 9.

¹² Kłoczowski, “Europa Środkowowschodnia w przestrzeni europejskiej”, in *Europa Środkowowschodnia...*, eds. Baczkowski and Smółucha, 14.

¹³ Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, 11.

¹⁴ Kłoczowski, “Chrześcijaństwo w Europie Środkowowschodniej i budowa organizacji kościelnej”, in *Ziemia polskie w X wieku i ich znaczenie w kształtowaniu się nowej mapy Europy*, ed. Henryk Samsonowicz (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), 4-5.

¹⁵ Wojciech Iwańczak writing of East-Central Europe defines pretty much the same area, accepting also criteria of an area delimitation based on geography. However, the three seas: the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea are the determinants to him, see: Wojciech Iwańczak, “Rola i znaczenie dwóch kręgów cywilizacyjnych. ‘Slavia occidentalis’ i ‘Slavia orientalis’ w dziejach Europy Środkowowschodniej (okcydentalizacja i bizantynizacja regionu)”, in *Europa Środkowowschodnia...*, eds. Baczkowski and Smółucha, 96.

¹⁶ He speaks, referring to Timothy Garton Ash, about the *core* (the term *heart* seems to be preferable) of the first region (1) – *heartlands*; Iwańczak “Rola i znaczenie”, 96.

¹⁷ Kłoczowski, “Wprowadzenie”, 9; Wandycz, *Price of Freedom*.

¹⁸ On the subject of the Czechs’ place in Europe in various 19th and 20th centuries concepts see: *Evropa očima Čechů. Sborník ze sympozia konaného v Centru Franze Kafky ve dnech 22-23 října 1996*, introduction Eva Hanová, (Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 1997).

¹⁹ Jan Křen, *Dvě století střední Evropy* (Praha: Argo 2005), 19.

²⁰ Milan Kundera, “Zachód porwany albo tragedia Europy środkowej”, trans. M.L., *Zeszyty Literackie*, 5 (1984): 14-31.

²¹ Together with that it should be added, that the term „East-Central Europe” is also used in German historiography see: Eduard Mühle, “East Central Europe as a Concept of German Historical Research”, in *Europe Centrale entre l’Est et l’Ouest. Central Europe between East and West*, ed. Kłoczowski (Lublin: Towarzystwo Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2005), 13-29.

²² “*Mitteuropa* became in so far popular, that it was used also in other languages for defining the territory from Rhein as far as Vistula and even Dnieper, and from the Baltic Sea to the Balkans”, see: Antoni Podraza, “Europa Środkowa jako region historyczny”, in *Europa Środkowowschodnia...*, eds. Baczkowski and Smołucha, 25; Podraza, “Central Europe as a Historical Region”, in *Europe Centrale entre l’Est et l’Ouest*. In Berlin 1904 Central European Economic Association (*Mitteuropäischen Wirtschaftsverein*) was established. The matter of its concern was carrying into effect the economic integration of Germany and Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and also expanding it on other countries (Belgium, Holland and Switzerland). “Thereby, connection of the term ‘Central Europe’ with German projects of political, economic and cultural domination over this region of our continent was initiated”, whereas “world war had to facilitate achievement of this purposes” (Podraza, “Europa Środkowa”, 26). Already mentioned, *stricte* political concept of Friedrich Neumann appeared not before this time. Yet, contemporary Czech historian Jan Křen in the monumental book titled *Dvě století střední Evropy* reminds earlier history of the Central Europe’s notion. The term appeared for the first time in Vienna Congress 1815. *Europe intermédiaire* was the area of to-day Germany and Benelux.

²³ Kłoczowski, “Wprowadzenie”, 18.

²⁴ Wincenty Lutosławski, “Naród polski (fragmenty)”, in *Dusza polska i rosyjska (od Adama Mickiewicza i Aleksandra Puszkina do Czesława Miłosza i Aleksandra Sołżenicyna)*, ed. Andrzej de Lazari (Warszawa: PISM, 2004), 112.

²⁵ Bronisław Trentowski, “Wizerunki duszy narodowej przez Ojczyźniaka (fragmenty)”, in *Dusza polska i rosyjska...*, 65.

²⁶ Krzysztof Czyżewski, *Linia powrotu. Zapiski z pogranicza*, preface Paweł Huelle (Sejny: Pogranicze, 2008), 43-54.

²⁷ Czyżewski’s concepts are also worth comparing with Bogusław Zieliński’s view of Central Europe proposed in the article under significant title “Europa Środkowa, czyli Arkadia, Atlantyda i Jeruzalem” (“Central Europe, that is Arcadia, Atlantis and Jerusalem”), in *Narodowy i ponadnarodowy model kultury. Europa Środkowa i Półwysep Bałkański*, ed. Bogusław Zieliński (Poznań: Wyd. UAM 2002), 39-57. The metaphor of Atlantis is also recalled in the book by Dubravka Ugrešić *The Culture of Lies: Antipolitical Essays*, but in reference to Yugoslavia: “The word Atlantis, which reminds the myth of disappearance of a country punished by gods, suddenly, when the war started, appeared as the metaphor of Yugoslavia. The choice of Atlantis for the metaphor confirms only common feeling of this disappearance inevitability”, Dubravka Ugrešić, *Kultura kłamstwa (eseje antypolityczne)*, trans. D. Cirlić-Straszyńska (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1998), 303 (English edition see: *The Culture of Lies. Antipolitical Essays*, trans. C. Hawkesworth, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press 1998). Together with that, the authoress quotes the book *Children of Atlantis: Voices from the Former Yugoslavia*, ed. Zdenko Lešić, introduction C. Hawkesworth (Budapest: Central European University Press 1995).

²⁸ The culture of the borderland in its character, The Jagiellonian *Rzeczpospolita* (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) is such a lost civilization. In this sense it functions in the same way as Central Europe for Czech, Slovak or Hungarian intellectuals, although it is not identical. That means, that Czyżewski is aware of the difference between Central Europe and East-Central Europe – what was discussed earlier – which difference is not always noticed in Poland; see: Czyżewski, *Linia powrotu*, 14, 31.

²⁹ Czyżewski, *Linia powrotu*, 73.

³⁰ Křen, *Dvě století*, 28.