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# **Boundaries of Literature, Boundaries of History, Boundaries of Boundaries.**

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### Boundaries of Literature, Boundaries of History, Boundaries of Boundaries

The history of the system is the system itself.

Roman Jakobson, Jan Tynianow (1927)

In the speech I delivered at a conference in Krasiczyn,<sup>1</sup> concerning the “contradictory” character of literary essence, I was working with an issue similar to the one assigned to me by the organizers of the Congress of Polish Language Scholars.<sup>2</sup> My main objective is still to work on rules for differentiating and separating literature from different forms of the written word. However, I would like to use this opportunity to examine the identity and historical malleability of literary art, which demands a set of boundaries that will precisely allow us to highlight these aforementioned features of identity and changeability.

First, let us take a quick look at the meaning of the term “boundary.” It does not have a fixed, canonical definition in literary studies (or in related fields of research), although it is not foreign to the terminological repertoire of our discipline. It can be found in the vast archival repositories (Lessing’s *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*), along with more contemporary works devoted to issues of methodology (*Boundaries of Historicity* [*Granice historyczności*, 1989], by Barbara Skarga), periodization (*Boundaries of Modernity* [*Granice współczesności*, 1965] by

<sup>1</sup> E. Balcerzan „Sprzecznościowa” koncepcja literackości, in *Sporne i bezsporne problemy wiedzy o literaturze*, red. W. Bolecki, R. Nycz, Warsaw 2002: 255-267.

<sup>2</sup> The “congress” version of the article appeared as “The Boundaries of Literature in the Historical Process.”

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Mieczysław Porębski), aesthetics (the volume of essays *Moving Boundaries* [*Ruchome granice*, 1968], ed. by Mieczysław Porębski), typology (thinking of the conflict over the “realism without boundaries,” 1963-1965 initiated by Roger Gaurady and Lucien Goldmann, which had Polish echoes),<sup>3</sup> comparative studies (*Hranice dialogu* by Petr Pošledni, *Českaproza očímápolské kritiky 1945-1995*, published in Prague in 1998), genology (*Boundaries of Poetry and Poetry without Boundaries* [*Granice poezji i poezja bez granic*, 2001] by Piotr Michałowski), stylistics (*Metaphor without Boundaries* [*Metafora bez granic*, 1980] by Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska) and delimitation (*Blurred Boundaries* [*Rozmyte granice*, 2000] by Grzegorz Grochowski). Indeed, I have devoted one of my own books (*By Way of Signs* [*Przez znaki*, 1972]) to discussing the boundaries of poetic autonomy.

At the same time, the limitative imagination (let us agree to use this previsionary term) appears whenever we do not speak straightforwardly about the “boundary,” but when its pseudonyms and equivalents – understood through the prism of Peiper’s thought – are taken into consideration. I think of instances such as reconstructing the morphology of a poem, considering the framework of a text according to the School of Tartu, asking questions about the coherence of verbal transmissions, etc.

At the level of day-to-day communications, we can take note of the boundary as a demarcation line (between two elements) or as an end (of something). Stanisław Przybyszewski had the second meaning in mind when, during the closing days of the Great War of 20th century, he proclaimed that by the “indolence of spirit” the world has reached “the boundary, at which doorstep the musical notations cancel each other, and render music mute.”<sup>4</sup>

In literary forms of communication, we can distinguish four interpretations of this concept that all build on common distinctions:

- 1 the existential boundary: between the being and non-being of *belles-lettres*,
- 2 the sign boundary: between *belles lettres* and other forms of interpersonal communication,
- 3 language’s internal boundary: between literary and non-literary modes of speech,
- 4 internal literary boundaries: between contemporary works and the literary tradition and/or national and foreign literature.

The question of the existence or non-existence of literary art and its boundaries tends to antagonize research attitudes. Not all modes of thinking and analysis that are currently employed allow for the possibility of positive outcomes for our inquiry. “We live in a defined age,” this age has a name and it is postmodernity. Its impetus provokes the revision of assumptions that we have considered undeniable for years.

<sup>3</sup> See S. Balbus *On Henryk Markiewicz – A Biographical Story with Digressions* [*O Henryku Markiewiczzu – opowieść biograficzna z dygresjami*]; H. Markiewicz *On Prus and Zeromski* [*O Prusie i Zeromskim*], Kraków 1995: 24.

<sup>4</sup> S. Przybyszewski “Returning Tide. Around Expressionism” [*Powracająca fala. Naokoło ekspresjonizmu*], in *Zdąży*, vol. 6, 1918: 170.

Not only have earlier theories found themselves under scrutiny, but also the very foundations of literary studies, notions widely agreed upon, such as “literature” and “history” come under fire. Attempts to dismantle the system (literature) encourages the dismantling of the order of its existence in time (history). It only proves the validity of one thesis of Russian formalism, preceding Prague’s structuralism, which states that “the history of the system, creates a system itself.”<sup>5</sup> The lack of “political (or artistic) correctness” for both notions, that are presently of interest, is stigmatized and accused of pointing to something without boundaries or existential foundations. It is perceived as something that is active only as a tool of repression in schools and the academy.<sup>6</sup>

Visions proposed by this circle are not homogenous.

Some describe “literature,” always framed by ironic quotation marks, as a meta-physical construct that is in desperate need of deconstruction (whatever that may denote). Others claim that verbal creations do not simply address the world that surrounds us, but are responsible for creating it. And since all words carry the same charge of literariness, how – the voices in question keep asking – can one confront literature with non-literature? Also, “history” is decomposing in many different ways. It is interpreted as literary fiction, the result of proceeding narratives, as the energy once unstoppable and now exhausted, or in the opposite manner – as a driving force of the literary universe. From the swamp of existing texts, this force is able to mine the “literature” it needs, or pushes it back into the textual sphere of chaos. In the name of its instant needs, it behaves with disregard for writers intentions, or the poetics of poems and novels and, by extension, our entire knowledge on the subject. An individual who decides to believe in all those theories agrees not with the “textual world,” but rather with a textual mess, in which all styles, conventions, and differences of communication dissolve and “overlap one another” like the flapping banners in Norwid’s mourning rhapsody.

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<sup>5</sup> M.R. Mayenowa “The Analysis of the Prague’s Circle Stylistic Doctrine” [*Analiza doktryny stylistycznej Praskiego Koła*] in *Prague’s School of Structuralism: 1926-1948* [Praska Szkoła Strukturalna w latach 1926-1948], M.R. Mayenowa, W. Górny, eds. Kraków 1966: 29.

<sup>6</sup> Polish lessons in schools have dealt with the history of literature already. Should the same thing happen to other fields of literary studies, like theory, poetics or interpretation? A stand against the “tyranny” of those disciplines, which supposedly takes away all the pleasures of assigned readings (understood as complete freedom in the choice of the mode of interaction with a given literary work), is taken by M.P. Markowski in his article “Interpretation and Literature” [*Interpretacja i literatura*] in *Sporne i Bezsporne...*, 405; by the same author, see “Unfamiliar Reaching for the Familiar” in *Second Texts*, vol.4, 2002: 241-46. In his opinion, the only possible interpretation which can be accepted is “a possibility of formulating any statement about any other statement” (396). Unfortunately, in this politically correct statement (“Freedom above all!”), logical integrity is threatened. Either a given statement is actually “free”, hence cannot be limited by any other statement, or it is a statement “about any other statement”, which means limitation and loosing the actual, desired freedom.

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The understanding of history was never free from shifting research goals and the pressures of methodological imagination.<sup>7</sup> This is why every definition will necessarily be perceived as biased and controversial. By focusing on the essential, simple, and shared elements of any concept of “history,” at least at the outset, will I be able to avoid this complication? At the very least, we can suggest the following items: 1) A human assemblage, gifted with “collective memory,”<sup>8</sup> which spans over more than one generation. It retains its identity and the conviction of continuity of its history, despite undergoing, more or less dramatic trials; 2) Internal connectivity and situational variability of the culture of a given community and/or of its particular orders (e.g. literary order). Literature perceived historically, similarly to other incarnations of culture, takes part in a two-fold drama that interchangeably activates and neutralizes the memory of its previous states, called tradition, as well as the memory (not necessarily literary) of collective history and aspirations.

The conglomerates of postmodern rhetoric, lexicographical research and anti-research attitudes (placing careless entertainment over the tedious and thorough labor of scientific discovery) can be simplified to four, single-sentence manifestos:

- 1 There is no literature or history – there is only the composing and reading of texts.
- 2 There is no literature – there is only history.
- 3 There is no history – there is only literature.
- 4 Literature and history did exist, but they have ended.

These hyperbolic declarations of postmodernity are unacceptable, unless we will edit them to fit and rule the entirety of interpersonal communications. Such a reign would have to be concluded not by the proclaimed restructuring of Polish studies,<sup>9</sup> but by its utter destruction. If there is anything today that has aged for rebuilding it is the dome of postmodernism – deteriorated like the Palace of Culture in Konwicki’s *Little Apocalypse*. The slogans of postmodernism do not have to be rejected. It would be enough to translate them out of the rhetoric of the manifesto into the form of a handbook. “Revolutionary” ideas and flirtatious aporia will become the paradigms of separate research goals. And out of these, we will be able to distinguish “laboratory” fields of research, in which – as is the case with phonology, metrics or narratology – we will observe selected features, moments, particles and aspects of empiricism, taking no account of the complicated state of affairs.

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<sup>7</sup> One of many proves of the modern times: essay by J. Topolski “Natural and Humanistic Point of View in the Historical Research” [*Przyrodniczy i humanistyczny punkt widzenia w badaniach historycznych*], in *Humanistyka przełomu wieków*, ed. J. Koziellecki, Warsaw 1999: 218-38.

<sup>8</sup> In multiple works of Jurij Lotman and his associates, the “phenomenon of culture” was interpreted as the “collective memory.”

<sup>9</sup> The official screening of the Polish language scholars convention.

Following this path, the first claim of postmodernism, “there is no literature or history – there is only the composing and reading of texts,” we can rewrite as follows: “Reading and writing texts using language can be observed, in certain research areas, outside of history, and therefore analyzed by omitting aspects of their literary character.” Descriptive linguistics has undertaken such studies for many years now.<sup>10</sup> The second claim, according to which “there is no literature – there is only history,” might be reduced to the assumption that history, as a mechanism for generating art of the written word, can become known (assuming for the time being the hypothesis about the exclusive character of this mechanism), not in order to prove its absolute truth, but rather to find forces in literature that try to resist history (by the way, this is how Karl Marx, a figure who is referenced by the worshipers of postmodern pragmatism, used to think). On the other hand, the contrasting third claim, which states that “there is no history – there is only literature,” would have to take the form of a delicate question about the boundaries of literature’s influence on history, both on the actual fate of nations, and the perceptions of it. This perspective could utilize the findings of earlier semiotic schools of thought.

Finally, the fourth “manifesto” point of postmodernity, which we identified as “literature and history did exist, but they have ended.” ought to be treated as another experimental assumption of a specialized field – within the branch of socio-psychology – working with subjective rules of perceiving the boundaries between the present and literary past. The past, perceived in a postmodern manner as a sequence of changes, breakthroughs and explosions, and set against the present that is understood as a stable configuration of self-duplicating poetics, would turn out to be one of the few available interpretations of the historical process. One should consider the reversed order, in which the past stands for an immobilized, frozen system and the present is experienced as a revolution, transforming in an unstoppable rush. In the end, we should also recall those who do not find any boundaries nor limits, both in the heritage of the past and the adventures of the present. In the entirety of literature, they simply try to spot the homogenous laws of great synchrony, or just the opposite – elements of a galloping diachrony.

As we can see, the existential boundary, dramatically problematized in post-modernism, can be distinguished by two, seemingly contradictory, features. This boundary is equally subjective and abstract. It is drawn not between signs and literary structures, but in the game of free associations connected with them. Helpless against speculations and fantasies – since literary norms do not belong to the world of mirages dreamt in the “your philosophy,” of Shakespeare, but are ruled by actual communication strategies in the real temporal and spatial dimensions of

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<sup>10</sup> Another possibility is revealed when we decide to treat literature as one of the ingredients of quasi-typological, multi-material made paradigm, the “suspension” of literariness – in this particular case – does not mean its negation. See E. Balcerzan “In the Direction of Multimedia Genology” [*W stronę genologii multimedialnej*] in *Genologia dzisiaj*, eds. W. Bolecki, I. Opacki, Warsaw 2000.

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culture – existential boundaries turns out to be less than useful in the process of reconstructing literary norms.

The three boundaries remaining on our list: those of signs, language, and literature – all run between concrete repositories of interpersonal communication. Each and every time, they divide and connect, isolate and invite to exchange, which means that their realms cannot be identical or completely alien to one another. They border each other, remaining in contact and belonging to an always greater realm of communication.

As we know, language constitutes the foundation for every other system of signs in the structural-semiotic tradition. Language is common, conservative, stable and relatively immune to attempts at reform. The Tartu-Mosco concept of secondary modeling systems, researched for establishing reduced norms of speech, was an extension of the aforementioned Saussure's concept. None of the secondary systems, be they architecture, etiquette, music, circus, or film, turned out to be more disciplined than language. Each of them lacks features which would make them similar to language. It is easy to distinguish *parole* in the film, but its hard to find *langue*.<sup>11</sup> In music, the plane of signifiers (*signifiant*) suppresses, or destroys the plane of the signified (*signifié*), etc. At least in realm of *belles lettres*, which constitutes itself in language, we might assume that we would be able to draw its boundaries in language itself. Not really. Linguistic categories fail to perform such functions, principally because of literature's two-fold allegiance to the world of language and art. This split was observed by the ancients, and in more modern times, it has been involved in debates over the literary and theatrical concepts of drama.

And if we were to reverse classical "foundational" semiotic thought? Let us assume that at the base of interpersonal communications there is not *langue*, but a semiotic universe: a repository of signs that were built of all the materials that proved to be efficient in transmitting meaning, and which are recognizable by means of all senses.<sup>12</sup> When education in communication starts, it uses many different means. "In the beginning was no Word" stated Danuta Danek,<sup>13</sup> and she had proof. Usually, what we encounter at the beginning of human existence is the vast stretch of signs, signals, symptoms and possible uses – all made of different materials.

What establishes the boundaries between different semiotic orders? Their substances and functions. The demarcation lines become painfully visible whenever we start using different materials to achieve separate goals. These distinctions are not equal between each other. The differentiating energy of substance (the material from which the signs are "made") seems to be much more suggestive than the energy

<sup>11</sup> See A. Helman's *What Is the Cinema? The Panorama of Cinematic Thought*. [Co to jest kino? Panorama myśli filmowej.], Warsaw 1978: 41-76. Old controversies, but worth remembering.

<sup>12</sup> In this concept, the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin meet the theory of the semiosphere by "late" Jurij Lotman. See J. Lotman *Culture and Explosion [Kultura i eksplozja]*, Warsaw 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Danek, D. *The Art of Understanding. Literature and Psychoanalysis*. [Sztuka rozumienia. Literatura i psychoanaliza.], Warsaw 1997: 196-200.

of function (the goal they serve). The distinctions based on different materials of which music and architecture, photography and dance, heraldic studies and small talk, fashion and collecting stamps are all made of, are rather obvious. But their functional particularities demand their own theory and interpretation – always in disagreement.<sup>14</sup>

I have mentioned the discrepancies between opinions on the literary and theatrical theories of drama for good reason. It is in the theater, first and foremost (and only later in the cinema), where we find the most prominent model of the boundary separating and connecting literature with other substances and the functions of signs. Let us imagine such (traditional) theatrical play, in which its initial linguistic form, accessible first through individual attempts at reading and rehearsals, made its way to the opening night without any losses and atrocities of the “director’s cut” and with all the didaskalia (blocking), in some types of play spoken out loud by the actors, were preserved. Other codes, which are a part of theatrical machinery, will be the subjects of literature’s dictatorship. It will give up exclusive access to its (linguistic) substance, but will still decide over the functions embedded in the entire play.<sup>15</sup>

In this particular model (passive at first sight) we are able to decode the announcement of upcoming changes, the reorientation and abolishment of hierarchy – of processes which are filled with new meaning by the history of the fluctuating boundaries of literature. None of the materials of the theatrical play (as it has been described here) lose their own original and ascribed functions in the play. They are marginalized, hidden, and – quoting Ingarden – “kept alert.” History of literary boundaries soon turns into an account of border skirmishes, into a chronicle of war for domination, and a tale of searching for new neighbors. These processes are not focused merely on preservation and the survival of specific literary passions and skills (both creative and perceptual), or refreshing transformations. They are also focused on participation in the fate of the literature of the history of ideas on the one hand, and the history of the civilization on the other. The literary theater (repertoire-based) has been an efficient way of transmitting national and civil ideas

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<sup>14</sup> I am referring to the idea expressed once in the essay “Aesthetics: the Fourth Element of Semiotics.” [*Estetyka: czwarta część semiologii.*] in *Teksty*, 1979 and *Teksty*, vol. 5: 1-7, which still manages to raise interest, proved by publishing of this essay, along with a polemical commentary in Slovakian anthology: J. Tranicka *Odpoetiky k diskursu. Fybor z polské literární teorie 70-90. let XX. století*, Brno 2002.

<sup>15</sup> The triumph of the art of the word over its different semiotic “maintenance” is felt most strongly not by the audience, but precisely by the people involved in the production of the play from the very beginning. Dialogues, different replicas of the original text of the drama, transcend beyond the confinement of the theater building. Lives of these people are filled with the quotes, and they identify the actor with his role, ascribing to him (even when in jest) features of his character’s personality. Literature borders here not only with the signs of the other arts, but with the semiotics of life – still in the position of power. The literary-theatrical model can be used to describe quasi-literary attempts of “writing life” for a good reason.



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for many years in Poland. Today, it can barely hold its position in a competition with other styles of performance, in which literature either disappears or fulfills purely ornamental function. And civil ideas and virtues find their expression in plays dominated by plasticity, works “written on the stage,” street happenings, or quasi-theatrical installations.

Despite the fashion for catastrophe – we should not be looking for proofs of the downfall of the art of the written word. The liberating successes of the theaters working with sources other than literary materials have coincided with literature’s (mainly novelistic) move to the realm of cinema and television. The list of works of literature, both grand and mediocre, that have been filmed and made their way to the cinema screens in Poland and around the world is too long to be reconstructed here. Nevertheless, it would show the impact of the art of the word on the new semiotics this very art started to occupy (enjoying its new place thanks to the civilizational innovations). The sheer force of the impact can be observed in various series of film, reminiscent of repeating literary translations. These are composed of competing adaptations which are repeatedly rehashed (e.g., *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Lady of Camellias*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Anna Karenina*, *Lolita*, *The Spring to Come*, *The Miracle Man*, and many others). Literary invasions noted in filmography used to be the strongest argument for the so called adjoined literary theory of film by Bolesław Lewicki.<sup>16</sup>

These processes are historical, contradictory and reversible. And these are the processes I had in mind, when at the beginning of this article, I pointed to the circumstantial malleability of the orders of art, as one of the unarguable elements of the historical process. Film grants refuge to existing literature, but it tries to replace it along the way (in line with the slogan “film is the novel of 20th century,” which today would probably be the soap opera – in competition with press novels printed in installments), or eliminate from its own structures, as some other theatrical genres have already done in the past.

But this list does not exhaust the borders of the word in the realm of arts. The boundaries drawn by the literature on materially alien territories can be seen relatively easily, precisely because their foreignness is not absolute. Some form of verbal communication is used in literature, theater, and cinema. In the transmutations that take place in both directions – literature into music and music into literature or visual art forms, and vice versa – and by transcending materials, we confront the foreignness of the material with the convergence of functions. We need to confront weaker factors with those that are stronger. The transmutations are merely the offers of a synesthetic pact. These are contracts concerning the illusion of “seeing” events presented in literature, or of “understanding” composed sounds, etc. They do not grant chances for the victory of any of the codes on differing sides of the sign boundary, and pose no threat of defeat. However, it is these crossings that (paradoxically?) turn out to be immune to history, if we decide to understand history as disposing of used orders (as sometimes happens in science and within civilization). Impos-

sible, undoable, tempting – the inter-semiotic translations come back in different epochs. They inspire the ingenious transcending of material boundaries, such as music in the literature of romanticism and symbolism, painting and architecture in avant-garde poetry, or even stranger peculiarities like Lucifer's symbols in Tadeusz Miciński's visions, the mysterious gnostic language of Bruno Schulz's prose, the "bird's language" of Velimir Khlebnikov's poems, crow's hieroglyphics in the winter epitaphs of Miron Białoszewski's *Oho*, and finally, the codes of chiromancy in the poetic experiments of Gennadiy Aygi. This is for the entertainment of the elites. Until postmodernists successfully level elitist and popular literature (and so far, nothing indicates this catastrophic scenario is unfolding), there will always be experiments with *ekphrasis* and poems wordlessly embedded into moving pictures (as is the case with the concert of Wojski in the "forest" sequence in the film adaptation of *Sir Thaddeus*).

Regardless of the differences between the semiotic boundaries of literature, they all allow us to take two factors, material and functional, into consideration and see them as fully distinguishable.

However, when we start asking about this alternation in terms of the boundary between the art of the word and other domains of speech, we immediately discover a lingering problem. How should we distinguish between different states of speech, literary and non-literary realms, when the material stays is the same in every verbal transmission? The first thing that we ought to say is that the material is never entirely the same. Literature does not come into being and does not function "in language in general." We are always dealing with the literature of a particular language, which fits into the paradigm of particular, and no other, phonetics, vocabulary, phraseology, and grammar. Since phonetic, lexical, or phraseological matters (of Hungarian and Polish, English and Chinese, Czech, and Flemish) differ, we should be allowed to look for similar, albeit weaker, distinctions within the boundaries of a given language (perceived as "multilingual"). Functional sub-codes, as indicated by their name, differ through their functions. But the differences are supported by characteristic expressions and words, intonation and sentence order of, for example, different registers of Polish – regional, various jargons, generational variances, the language of the parliament, the church, finance, the judiciary, sports, academics, etc. It is necessary to recall these obvious facts, using them as a background, to understand this delicate and complex question: can *belles lettres*, having evolved over the centuries in so many different directions, genres, and conventions, be perceived as a field distinguished by separate, exclusive characteristics of speech? From the perspective of literary theory, the answer to this question must be, perhaps surprisingly, different than from the perspective of literary history. The theoretician will not find foundations to grant literature "as such" the eternal privilege of its own vocabulary, separate phraseology, and at the same time, refuse it the right to freely transform everything that speech has to offer. But the theoretical model does not have to start operating immediately. It can march toward complete fulfillment for a long time – sometimes forever. No wonder the historian, in every phase of the

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historical process, will encounter particular features of substance of finished works and observe in them the mechanisms of closure in which *belles lettres* of a certain epoch tries to separate itself (assumed to be inappropriate or pointless) from types of speech, and at the same time break open closures which it finds too strict (it is enough to mention the young Mickiewicz and his passionate tirade, defending oriental and folk dialects).

Amongst all the boundaries of literature, this one is the most historic and capable of shifting over time – constantly changing, in point of fact.

Recently, we have heard that these two perspectives – historical and theoretical – have overlapped. Literature lost all of its blockades and speaks with all available sub-codes of speech. Hence, it cannot differentiate itself. But these accounts come from the popular gutter, and as long as breaking taboos (on this particular subject) will be considered an act of courage and a revolutionary gesture, inspiring all sorts of emotions, from ecstasy to disgust – it will be hard to speak about the disappearance of boundaries. For what, then, would the critics praise the lyricism of vulgarity of the generation of transformation? Why would Miłosz praise Gretkowska, “Przekrój” support Masłowska, and *Gazeta Wyborcza* Kuczok? How could something that does not exist be transcended?

We have to remember that language does not consist purely of its vernacular. In the repositories of speech we will find systems resistant to literary transformations, strongly codified according to their own meanings and duties, and almost fully hermetic. These systems are so alienated that within literature we will find merely snippets, careful citations, small lexical games, and shy mimetic attempts to employ their usage. All samples of these system’s language will be engulfed by the elements of speech familiar to the readers and the realm of literature. Those who speak of a lack of boundaries in literature, because *wsio dozwoliono* [all is permitted], should read the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* and *Gazeta Prawna*. Let him leaf through the pages of civil and military contracts, PhD dissertations in physics, mathematics or chemistry, or descriptions of technologies designed for heavy industry. He will witness that literature does not cross all boundaries, because not every crossing proves to be artistically valuable and sensible from the vantage point of communication.

As I have mentioned, when drawing linguistic boundaries, function is more important than the substance/material.

The insufficiency of substantial differentiation of speech is compensated by literature. It takes certain sub-codes of language and treats them like substance. These functions are redirected, so that they can purposefully serve a given work and its poetics. What happens to the press note about a missing person in Różewicz’ *White Dots* is later, in an almost systemic fashion, repeated in all literary transfigurations of the modes of speech. Let us repeat that linguistic boundaries of literature (all differently, but according to the same rule) are placed not in abstract systems, but in texts. We recognize them as differences between what has been left from the

linguistic material and what has been transformed. At this point, we need to remind of an old opposition coined by Opojaz, between form and material.

From the repetition of the processes described, the fourth boundary comes into being within language. It is called internal literary boundary. Also, this particular boundary appears in literary works. It exploits differences between substances (lexical, phraseological, syntactical) of different literary genres and corpuses of writers. It surfaces between what is present and past, things in preparation and ready, active and passive, things transformed and in transformation. But here, literature transforms itself, treating its past states as the material of its present.

Distinctions between boundaries presented in this paper, divided between external (existential, and of the signs) and internal (linguistic, literary) intersect without collisions with one more typology, to which I have been alluding *ad hoc*, and which I would like to present at the very end in four sentences:

- a) the boundaries of literature are the boundaries of its functions;
- b) the boundaries of literature are the boundaries of its substance;
- c) the boundaries of literature are the boundaries of its reception;
- d) the boundaries of literature are the boundaries of its innovation.

*Translation: Jan Pytalski*