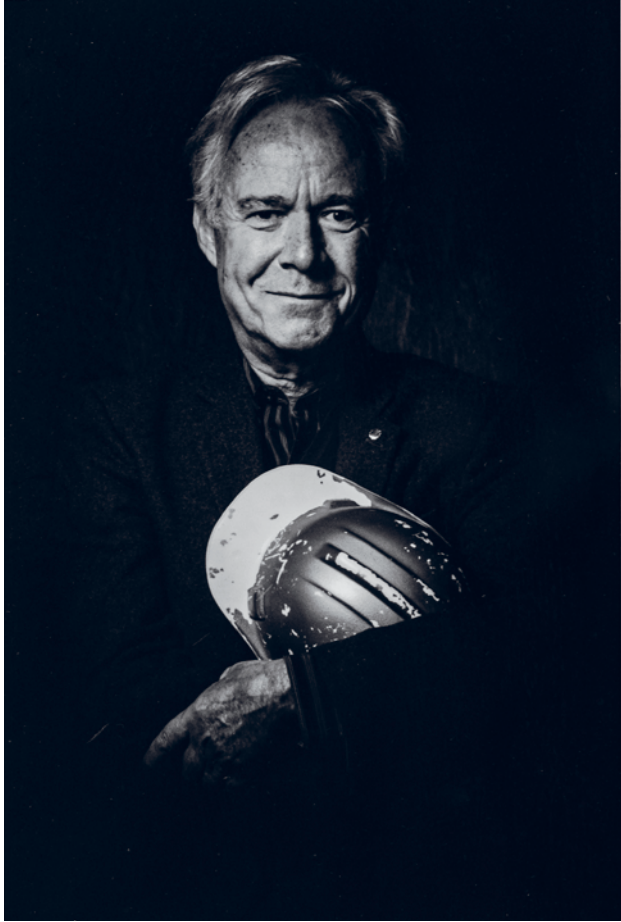


ON TIME  
Essays in Honour of  
Professor Jerzy Limon



**ON TIME**  
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**Professor Jerzy Limon**

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## Introduction

“Time is a language. . . . Time ‘speaks,’” notes Jerzy Limon in the novel *Młot na poetów albo Kronika ściętych głów* (The Malleus Poetarum, or A Chronicle of Severed Heads).<sup>1</sup> Throughout his distinguished career, Limon was remarkably attentive to this language, always trying to decipher and record the rules governing it. In doing this, he employed various systems of notation, speaking from the position of a Shakespeare scholar, historian and theoretician of theatre, prose writer, and translator. Starting from the assumption that language “introduces you to History, to another . . . dimension of memory. A different geometry,”<sup>2</sup> he reanimated the past in his readers’ present. Most importantly perhaps, Limon’s meticulous archival research, as he studied the fortunes of itinerant English actors in mainland Europe in the early modern period or the history of the so-called Fencing School in Gdańsk, not only resulted in numerous publications, including the influential monograph *Gentlemen of a Company: English Players in Central and Eastern Europe, 1590–1660*,<sup>3</sup> but also led to the foundation of a new major institution on the cultural map of Europe, i.e., the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre. Today, on almost the very same spot where the townspeople of Gdańsk once admired performances by English travelling players, there stands a theatre built like a treasure chest with the jewel of the stage inside, to use a comparison made by its architect Renato Rizzi. For Limon, the GST building, which is equipped with a system of changeable stages (the Italian stage can easily shapeshift into the Elizabethan stage or theatre-in-the round), is a work of art that carries a multi-layered message on the nature of time, giving a tangible

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<sup>1</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Młot na poetów albo Kronika ściętych głów. Interaktywna historia powieściowa* [The Malleus Poetarum, or A Chronicle of Severed Heads: An Interactive Novelistic Story] (Gdańsk: Fundacja Terytoria Książki, 2014), 76–77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>3</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Gentlemen of a Company: English Players in Central and Eastern Europe, 1590–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

form to its elusive substance and visualising its passage. In Limon's view, the architectural shape of the theatre reminds us of bygone eras and their historical performance practices while simultaneously drawing extensively from the present, a feat of temporal syncretism which is perhaps best evidenced by the theatre's opening roof. An inherently modern technological marvel, it also evokes the open, roofless structures of Elizabethan theatres or even those of ancient amphitheatres, while the black-and-white checkerboard pattern decorating the inner side of its wings can trigger associations with the world of commedia dell'arte.

Limon's extensive research on the history of the "Elizabethan" theatre in Gdańsk was an important segment of his long-term study of the English culture of the early modern age, with special attention to theatre and drama, which led to the publication of *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24*,<sup>4</sup> where he examines the intersections of literature, politics, and censorship, and, slightly later, *The Masque of Stuart Culture*,<sup>5</sup> which focuses on the methods of generating meaning on the English court stage during the reign of the Stuarts. This line of research culminated in two monographs that, while still devoted to Shakespeare and his age, move beyond the thematic scope of theatre. *Szekspir bez cenzury* (Shakespeare Uncensored)<sup>6</sup> unravels the secrets of erotic wordplay in Elizabethan drama. The slightly later *Szekspir. Siedem grzechów głównych* (Shakespeare: The Seven Deadly Sins),<sup>7</sup> in turn, centres on moral allegories in the theatre and the visual arts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, also revealing some unexpected affinities between these two realms that emerged against the backdrop of the booming urban culture of the early modern period. These two publications, as well as numerous other studies by Limon, attest as much to his

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<sup>4</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Jerzy Limon, *The Masque of Stuart Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Szekspir bez cenzury. Erotyczny żart na scenie elżbietańskiej* [Shakespeare Uncensored: The Erotic Pun on the Elizabethan Stage] (Gdańsk: Fundacja Terytoria Książki, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Szekspir. Siedem grzechów głównych (z zarazką w tle)* [Shakespeare: The Seven Deadly Sins (With the Plague in the Background)] (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2021).

astonishing erudition as to his lifelong fascination with the possibility of creating a model of the world by means of art. Limon's Shakespeare is, therefore, above all Shakespeare the semiotician, as he is described in the title of one of his articles—a dramatist whose oeuvre is conditioned by a thorough understanding of the rules behind the art of theatre. For this very reason, Shakespearean drama and its stage adaptations provide a particularly conducive environment for Limon's insightful studies of the opalescence of fiction and reality on the theatre stage, the mechanics of soliloquies and asides, or the functions of the play-within-a play.

Limon's scholarly analysis of Shakespeare's oeuvre, with its inherent reflection on the workings of theatre and the nature of the human world this theatre is meant to signify, is organically connected to his study of the processes taking place in the "chemical laboratory of the stage," to use the title of a chapter in the monograph *The Chemistry of the Theatre: Performativity of Time*.<sup>8</sup> The idea of theatre's chemistry is not just a striking metaphor here; it captures the very essence of the process of generating clusters of scenic signs, or, as Limon calls them, "theatrical blends." A particularly interesting blend of this type is stage speech, a structure which is no longer exclusively verbal because it shares in the materiality of its scenic surroundings, as indicated in yet another volume in Limon's theoretical polylogy, *Brzmienia czasu* (Sounds of Time).<sup>9</sup> By devising the theatrical formulae of integration, which are meant to indicate how the various signs present on the theatre stage can transfer their properties and meanings to one another, Limon draws the reader's attention to the processual nature of all communication in theatre. Accordingly, he speaks of the process of "sculpting" performers' bodies, language, space, and, above all, time, which he describes as the "fifth dimension of theatre" or "the magical binder of all things theatrical."<sup>10</sup> Thus, in Limon's view, acting is time embodied, to paraphrase the title of one of the chapters of *Brzmienia czasu*. Searching for the essence of the art of acting, Limon returns to the idea of language as a system of notation.

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<sup>8</sup> Jerzy Limon, *The Chemistry of the Theatre: Performativity of Time* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Brzmienia czasu. O aktorstwie i mowie scenicznej* [Sounds of Time: On Acting and Scenic Speech] (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Limon, *The Chemistry*, 99.

Thus, in his understanding of theatre, the actor's gestures, movements, and utterances are a quasi-textual record of the activities of some other (fictional) figure contained within a different temporal dimension. This results in the formation of a twofold stream of time to be experienced in the theatre: a unique mixture of the performative present of the actor (which is identical with the viewer's present) and the past (or less frequently, the future) of the fictional character, which the actor transfers into the present of the audience.

Another area where time is artistically modelled is Limon's own prose fiction. The events described in *Münchhauseniada* (The Münchhauseniade), *Kaszubska Madonna* (The Kashubian Madonna), *Wieloryb* (The Whale), and *Koncert Wielkiej Niedźwiedzicy* (The Great Bear Concerto)<sup>11</sup> mostly take place in their author's beloved Kashubia; their timespan, however, stretches over many centuries and is constantly subject to literary shaping. As part of a sophisticated game with texts and contexts, history here blends with the fiction of the apocrypha, memory—with the author's fantasy. Limon's fiction is limited by imagination only, and it is always fuelled by curiosity and wonder, which is also true of his work as a translator of Shakespearean drama (in cooperation with Władysław Zawistowski). Limon's translations of Tom Stoppard's plays—known for their unlikely merger of seemingly uninhibited playfulness with deep reflection on the nature of the theatrical medium—are distinguished not only by literary inventiveness but also by a lightness of tone. In fact, Limon's entire literary output is permeated by humour and empathy. Despite his acute awareness of all the evil that is inscribed in human nature and of the transience of all things earthly, his prose leads to a reconciliation with the world and an acceptance of earthly temporality: it is the domain of great consolation.

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<sup>11</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Münchhauseniada* [The Münchhauseniade] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1980); Jerzy Limon, *Kaszubska Madonna* [The Kashubian Madonna] (Gdańsk: Graf, 1991); Jerzy Limon, *Wieloryb. Wypisy źródłowe* [The Whale: Extracts from Sources] (Gdańsk: Tower Press, 1998); Jerzy Limon, *Koncert Wielkiej Niedźwiedzicy. Kantata na jedną ulicę, siedem gwiazd i dwa głosy* [The Great Bear Concerto: A Cantata for One Street, Seven Stars, and Two Voices] (Warszawa: „Twój Styl,” 1999).

## Introduction

\*

One of Limon's favourite Shakespearean concepts was that of the "syllables of time" (*Macbeth*, 5.5)—probably because it accords with his conviction that when we use language, whether natural or that of art, to impose some kind of form upon the past, we lift the bygone on to a completely different plane of existence by making it part of our present experience. The same intentions stand behind the publication of this volume, which is meant to show that Limon's time is still present time, although it can now be experienced differently: within the dimension of memory, reading, inspiration, dialogue, and polemics. The title of our book echoes what most intrigued Limon in theatre and art—the fascination with the temporal always being at the core of his scholarly and literary pursuits—but also points to the actual times in which he lived and worked, whose rhythm was determined by the successive stages in the construction of the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre, the annual Gdańsk Shakespeare Festival, and the numerous artistic and academic projects that he initiated and often co-authored. The title is also meant to draw the reader's attention to the evolutions and changes that have taken place in the humanities over the last few decades and left their imprint on Limon's research. Equally, it points to the time of his individual academic and artistic peregrinations.

Many of the above-mentioned notes are sounded in the opening chapter by Michael Dobson, who considers the ways in which Limon's research on the activities of English travelling players in mainland Europe contributed to a change in the intellectual geography of Shakespeare studies. Dobson's discussion of the gradual opening of international Shakespearean institutions to Central and Eastern European researchers, which is set against the background of the political and cultural changes in Europe, is interspersed with personal memories, recounted in an often humorous tone, which is very much in line with the poetics of play and laughter that was so close to Limon himself. Limon's studies on the presence of English actors on the continent are also recalled by Patryk Kencki, who writes, however, from a different perspective—that of scholarly reflection on the history of Old Polish theatre. Kencki's overview of Limon's publications devoted to the Fencing School indicates that it was precisely because of these studies that the theatrical life of early

modern Gdańsk came to be viewed as an important chapter in the history of European culture. In a similar vein, the presence of English comedians at the courts of the Polish Vasas is no longer perceived as a local phenomenon, but as part of a much wider process of reception of English theatre in seventeenth-century Europe.

The complex sociocultural background to the activities of English players on the continent, including the multiplicity of reasons behind their decision to leave their homeland, as well as the various fluctuations that affected the acting troupes travelling around Europe, is then discussed by Ronan Paterson. In the introduction to his chapter, Paterson acknowledges the inspiration that he himself drew from Limon's oeuvre, especially *Gentlemen of a Company*, which led to the revival of the Northumberland Theatre Company, a theatre ensemble the author once headed. Paterson's combination of personal reminiscence with academic argument inspires many questions about the relationship between Shakespeare studies and contemporary theatre practice. A further two of Limon's monographs, devoted to theatrical life in England during the reign of the Stuarts, are then extensively discussed by György E. Szőnyi, who highlights their trademark methodological syncretism. Writing about *Dangerous Matter*, Szőnyi emphasises Limon's combination of the structuralist principles of cultural semiotics with a prescience of the poststructuralist methods of New Historicism, reader response criticism, and Foucault's study of power. *The Masque of Stuart Culture*, in turn, is viewed as an innovative publication synthesising the achievements of semiotics, poetics, cultural history, and historical anthropology. In his chapter, Szőnyi also discusses the idea of the political function of art as proposed by Limon, which is in operation when a given work evokes non-textual associations with the contemporary political situation in its audience.

The next group of chapters addresses the theory of theatre as developed by Limon, with particular emphasis on the notion of time. The first to engage in creative dialogue with Limon's theoretical thought is Tomasz Kubikowski. Having recognised that at the core of Limon's theory stands his reflection on the phenomenon of acting—a problem of fundamental importance for any theoretical work on theatre and yet one extremely difficult to define—Kubikowski focuses on the constellation of conceptual systems devised by Limon in such works as *Brzmienia czasu* or *Piąty*

*wymiar teatru* (Theatre's Fifth Dimension).<sup>12</sup> Once again, time, in its numerous possible meanings and associations, turns out to be of crucial importance here. A major point made in the chapter, though, is that in Limon's theory of the theatre, time assumes the character of a grand metonymy; actually, it is just one of the many dimensions of the world generated during the performance—a world it might be easier to characterise using the category of "performativity." Time and space in the theatre, or rather, their role in the methodology of theatre research as practised by Limon, are also examined by Tomasz Wiśniewski, who traces the almost decade-long evolution of Limon's views as a theorist—an evolution which, as indicated in the chapter, is representative of a broader direction of change in theatre semiotics. In Wiśniewski's view, Limon gradually moves away from the rather dogmatic model of theatre in which the nature of the medium is determined by a number of prescriptive theoretical assumptions, to come up with a more descriptive, nondogmatic, and individualised model. This is most fully expounded in *The Chemistry of the Theatre*. Wiśniewski also carries out an in-depth, partially critical analysis of Limon's idea of the "fifth wall" separating the realm of theatrical fiction from the ontologically different domain of the viewer's reality. Finally, he confronts Limon's theoretical assumptions with a practical analysis of selected phenomena in the British and Irish theatre of the last few decades.

Limon's pioneering achievements in the field of theatre studies are also discussed by Patrice Pavis, who finds them applicable to his own research in the field of the performing arts. Analysing the article "A Candle of Darkness: Multiplied Deixis in Roberto Ciulli's *King Lear*,"<sup>13</sup> the author of *Dictionary of the Theatre* highlights the comprehensive nature of Limon's analytical method, which is based on a combination of erudite knowledge of the Elizabethan theatre, a thorough dramaturgical analysis of the play text, and a precise study of its stage adaptation. Pavis is fascinated by the concept of stage speech, which in his view brings together Limon's three main fields of research, i.e., theatre

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<sup>12</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Piąty wymiar teatru* [Theatre's Fifth Dimension] (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Jerzy Limon, "A Candle of Darkness: Multiplied Deixis in Roberto Ciulli's *King Lear*," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 22, no. 2 (2008): 83–102.

theory, the study of the dramatic text, and performance analysis. He is equally interested in Limon's ideas of multiplied deixis or the compatibility of language and stage acting, since these categories appear to be convergent with that of "verbo-corps," postulated by Pavis in his own research on theatre.

The philosophy of time that emerges from Limon's theoretical work, including the idea of theatre's fifth dimension which is so central to his argument, is also discussed by Sylwia Dobkowska, who sets it in the context of selected anglophone studies on the nature of theatrical representation and on the forms of audience engagement in the performance. Dobkowska tests the applicability of Limon's categories to the discussion of contemporary performative forms which are suspended somewhere between theatre, the Internet, and the visual arts, and for which the co-presence of the actor and the spectator is not a necessary prerequisite. She also reflects on the possibility of using Limon's ideas in discussing the Japanese Nō theatre—a type of performance that is particularly rich in complex temporal structures. The multi-layered model of theatre as postulated by Limon is also the starting point for Aneta Mancewicz's analysis of the modern formula of the spectacle-installation with elements of virtual reality. As noted in the chapter, contemporary Shakespearean adaptation supplies a welcome ground for some of the most innovative applications of mixed reality (MR) in the performing arts. Focusing on the non-obvious organisation of space and time in the virtual installation *Hands-on-Hamlet* by the Brussels collective CREW, Mancewicz determines what conditions would need to be met for this type of installation to be perceived as a form of theatre and how virtual reality can influence our understanding of the theatre as a medium. In these considerations, she is aided by Limon himself, speaking from the position both of a theatre theorist and of a viewer who had the opportunity to watch *Hands-on-Hamlet* during the 2017 European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA) conference in Gdańsk.

In the final chapter to focus on Limon's theoretical output, Jacek Fabiszak explores the workings of the hybrid phenomenon of television theatre. Having noted that Limon was probably the only researcher to have comprehensively and systematically studied the complex nature of the teleplay, which is suspended between stage and screen and uses ekphrasis



as its principal means of expression, Fabiszak then confronts Limon's theoretical model of television theatre expounded in *Trzy Teatry* (Three Theatres) and *Obroty przestrzeni* (Revolutions of Space) with contemporary telegenic practice.<sup>14</sup> Using a recent adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Katarzyna Klimkiewicz as his example, Fabiszak highlights such distinctive features of the teleplay as its amorphous space, which is ultimately shaped by the camera, its focus on dialogue, and its "reportage" quality, and draws a number of analogies between contemporary television art and the Elizabethan theatre.

A major point of reference for the next group of chapters is Limon's last book-length study, *Szekspir. Siedem grzechów głównych*, which perfectly reflects the multidimensional character of contemporary Shakespeare studies. Thus, Olga Kubińska situates Limon's scholarly achievement in the context of Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics, tracing the gradual transition of Limon's research from the sphere of the theatre historian, focused on documentation and archives, through that of the historian of drama, politics, and culture, to the sphere of the reader, as evidenced by such outstanding interpretive works as the previously mentioned *Szekspir. Siedem grzechów głównych* or the slightly earlier *Szekspir bez cenzury*. In Kubińska's understanding, the experience of meticulously studying documents in archives and libraries—combined with his acquired skills as a Shakespearean and a historian of theatre, as well as his talent and imagination—enabled Limon to open the door of the (no longer spatially understood) archive of the imagination, which in turn allowed him to interpret Shakespearean drama against the background of early modern painting and graphic arts. Limon's sensitivity to the visual arts, both in their historical and contemporary dimension, is also emphasised in Agnieszka Żukowska's discussion of the contemporary firework spectacle by the New York-based artist Cai Guo-Qinag, which took place in Florence in 2018. Entitled *City of Flowers in the Sky*, it resounds with references to Sandro Botticelli's *La Primavera*. Starting from Limon's remarks on the process of "blending" in art and theatre

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<sup>14</sup> Jerzy Limon, *Trzy teatry. Scena, telewizja, radio* [Three Theatres: Stage, Television, Radio] (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2003); Jerzy Limon, *Obroty przestrzeni. Teatr telewizji. Próba ujęcia teoretycznego* [Revolutions of Space: Television Drama: Attempt at a Theoretical Approach] (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2008).

and on the affinities between the visual arts and the stage, Żukowska applies his inclusive method of analysing theatre and art to the discussion of a postmodern work, situating it in the context of both its painterly source and the surrounding cityscape. Another important point of reference for Żukowska's chapter is the theory and practice of early modern firework displays (*feux d'artifice*), the principles of which are here shown to have been intuitively grasped by the contemporary artist.

In *Szekspir. Siedem grzechów głównych*, Limon deals with the non-obvious yet close relationship between Shakespeare and the Old Masters, which can be observed on the ideological plane of his plays. Following this lead, Małgorzata Grzegorzewska attempts to read *The Merchant of Venice* in the context of the spectral presence on its pages of the residual cult of Catholic saints, especially those that were believed to protect against the plague, and of medieval and early modern iconography of St. Sebastian and St. Anthony. Having highlighted the circumstances that could have influenced Shakespeare's writing, in particular his handling of the figures of Antonio and Bassanio, Grzegorzewska points to the existence of a specific kind of tension between the themes of commerce and trade appearing in the play and its apology for Christian mercy. Limon's last book publication, in which he focuses on Shakespeare's depiction of sin as an essential element of human nature, is also a source of inspiration for Marta Gibińska, in a chapter concerned with the ambiguous nature of the so-called Shakespearean "happy comedies." Although plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, or *Twelfth Night* all conclude in a seemingly optimistic manner and are all characterised by their predilection for farce and comic episodes, Gibińska perceives them as instruments of serious reflection on the nature of human existence. In her view, Shakespeare's "happy comedies" generally lead to a bitter conclusion on the fleeting, if not entirely illusory, nature of all earthly bliss, as well as mirroring the secrets and deficiencies of human nature. The ambiguous character of such plays results from the playwright's aversion to clearcut genre divisions, which is actually to be felt throughout his oeuvre.

Shakespeare's artistry and boldness are manifested not only in his seemingly effortless crossing of boundaries between genres, but also, as suggested by Limon, in his penchant for erotic puns, some of them

very sophisticated. Using *Szekspir bez cenzury* as her starting point, Dobrochna Ratajczakowa focuses on selected aspects of Shakespearean wordplay, treating Limon's penultimate book as an invitation to participate in a procedure which is both creative and intellectually daring. According to Ratajczakowa, the erotic pun is one of the constituent elements of the universe of the Shakespearean text; as such, it can serve as a cultural key to its lush—and absurd—world. A related key word running through many of Limon's works is censorship, as pointed out by Zbigniew Majchrowski in his analysis of scattered texts by the founder of the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre. As Limon describes the various forms of censorship, he sets it alongside its twin issue of artistic provocation, which is especially visible in the fields of Shakespeare translation, contemporary theatre, and avant-garde art. Perusing these small narratives, such as essays, feuilletons, or articles in theatre programmes, often with rather bold titles, Majchrowski arrives at the conclusion that in his capacity as an essayist Limon is concerned not so much with institutional censorship as with historically changing cultural norms, whose very presence often encourages artists to disregard the restrictions imposed on them. The chapter also investigates the possible reasons for Limon's affirmation of certain forms of censorship, viewed here as the scholar's protest against the ongoing process of blurring the boundaries between theatre and journalism, or more broadly speaking—between art and non-art. When one thinks of Limon's own literary achievement, his praise of censorship may appear somewhat surprising, but it surely encourages further reflection.

Limon's literary output and his studies in the field of theatre theory are then brought together by Jacek Kopciński. Returning to the category of time, so central to this volume, Kopciński presents Limon as the weaver of a special kind of historical narrative in which the past does not disappear forever, but enters the realm of memory, i.e., the "fifth dimension" of human existence. Kopciński's analysis of selected fragments of Limon's prose indicates that its author was always interested in the sophisticated aesthetic procedures that can be used to manipulate time, which, in the world of art, is no longer measurable by our watches, calibrated to a fixed standard. However, Limon's "calibration" of time, as Kopciński puts it, is not only of aesthetic, but also of axiological and existential importance, which makes it a highly original research and artistic category.

As demonstrated in this chapter, Limon's debut novel *Münchhauseniada*, which evokes associations with the oeuvre of Bruno Schulz, also has a generational and personal dimension. It reflects both the political upheaval of the times of Solidarity and the inner conflict of the author in his twofold capacity as a scholar and a creative writer; in his later works, Limon would solve this conflict with the help of a fluid discursive formula on the border between history and literature. Limon's output as a fiction writer thus eludes all attempts at literary categorisation, as is shown by Artur Blaim in the chapter that follows. Seeing in Limon the defender of the autonomy of literature, a writer convinced that art should neither be reduced to a mere carrier of an ideology nor serve to illustrate some fashionable theory, Blaim turns to the universe of Limon's prose to place particular emphasis on its depiction of the complex relationships between memory and reality as well as its theoretical reflection on the concept of history and its practical applications, e.g., in the construction of the (re)presented world in the text. Blaim's discussion of Limon's major works of fiction, such as *Münchhauseniada*, *Koncert Wielkiej Niedźwiedzicy*, *Wieloryb*, or *Młot na poetów*, leads him to formulate three categories that may be helpful in understanding the temporal structures present in these texts: the construction or reconstruction of the past thus takes place at the consensual, idiosyncratic, and metaphorical level.

One of the novels listed above, *Wieloryb*, is then subjected to further analysis by Małgorzata Jankowska, in a chapter devoted to the apocryphal character of this textual palimpsest, which is visible, for example, in its underlying tendency to appropriate, modify, and re-write fragments of other works, narratives, and genre conventions. As demonstrated by Jankowska, Limon's fluid text, with its multiplication of pseudonymous authors and its emphasis on the creative role of the reader, provides a model example of "weak" authorship in literature. All this makes the universe of *Wieloryb* an ideal environment for self-referential reflection on the relationship between the original and the translation—or, more broadly speaking, between reality and fiction—and finally also on the notion of truth, both of the text and of history.

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One of the descriptions of *Młot na poetów* to be found in the novel reads: “a space I created, a geometry in which history, as it were, calls itself into being.”<sup>15</sup> In a similar way, we hope that this volume will furnish a unique cognitive and creative space, a space of dialogue with Jerzy Limon, whose voice will always resound in the present tense.

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Agnieszka Żukowska, Jean Ward, Maria Fengler

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<sup>15</sup> Limon, *Młot na poetów*, 89.

## Introduction

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