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*How did Tadeusz Żeleński create Boy? Strategies, self-creation, images*

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Summary

This dissertation is based on two premises: lack and fascination. It is a searching for answers to questions about Boy's activities (mainly in the interwar period) undertaken in the field of shaping his image, authoring strategies and self-creation, as well as the fascination with his excellent Polish language contributed to research and the making of certain assumptions about the formation of Boy's literary autobiography. Those guesses about Boy's deliberate and conscious action crystallized into an idea of looking at this issue in a special way. Therefore, the aim of the study was to try to show the intended shaping of literary autobiography by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński. The hypothesis about the intentional organization of this autobiography had to be tested on the basis of the research questions posed as it follows:

1. What was Boy's awareness of the various possibilities of using the mass media and how did he make use of them?

2. How did Boy shape his brand and why is he allowed to write something that others cannot?

3. How did Boy influence the recipients (analysis of the effects of an individual's actions as a result of adopting a specific social role), what tools did he use for this?

4. What were the ways in which his image functioned?

5. What were and still are the keys to receiving Boy's public image?

6. Autobiographical statements – whom he was in them?

7. How did Boy express opinions and create his own legend?

8. What were the self-creation environments – in which circles did Boy create his image, did he distinguish himself from other artists with the ways of building his image?

9. What was the role of the pseudonym in shaping the literary autobiography?

10. How did Tadeusz Żeleński create Boy?

The last questions became the title of this dissertation. It is divided into three parts: strategies, self-creations and images. They are preceded by an initial proposal of a new look at a literary autobiography and its shaping (using the term „sparkling autobiography”, created to the needs of these reflections), by comments on the methodology, which is interdisciplinary in its nature; considerations on the state of researching the contexts of Żeleński’s works, including those relating mainly to the 21st century. In this section, I have tried to locate the author of *Słówka* in the literary field of the ‘dwudziestolecie międzywojenne’ and ‘Młoda Polska’, and to show what relations influenced Boy's position in the period.

The first part of the work deals with the strategies, both author's and media-oriented, which were undertaken by Boy Żeleński in order to shape his literary "I". The subsection on the use of the pseudonym "Boy" and all ways of signing documents by Tadeusz Żeleński, as well as various forms of the surname used by him over the course of almost 20 years is particularly important. The extensive fragment on the media (in this case, first of all, the press) is intended to supplement the knowledge about Żeleński's attitude to the media reality of the time, in which he operated, and the author's extraordinary ability to use the thin and thick mass media by the author. As a result, this part shows the uncompromising attitude of Boy, called by his opponents "advertising" in using all possibilities to promote himself and his work. Despite the terms probably unknown to Żeleński in the field of public relations, marketing, social communication or brand management, this part also indicated how much knowledge or intuition Boy-Żeleński had, using certain tricks in dealing with the readers or managing the Biblioteka Boya (although these actions were not effective enough, and Żeleński failed as the publisher). The given examples of texts written by Boy and concerning state-owned enterprises (ee., LOT airlines, vodka monopoly) show that he would fit perfectly in the contemporary advertising world. One could jokingly say that in our time Boy would advertise certain products, such as laptops or tablets, alcohol, menswear, restaurants or watches; as effectively as football players or actors do nowadays. The **strategy** section ends with considerations on how the media became a facade that the writer could hide behind, so as to maintain a minimum of privacy, and at the same time present and offer the Boy that the audience wanted to see.

Shaping Boy as a figure for readers became the subject of my reflection in the second part on **self-creation**. Creating his own biography, his own legend, Boy consistently used masks, including the masks of a fool and a sage, as a tool with which he addressed his readers. At the same time it allowed him to write about taboo topics, such as the conscious motherhood, divorce or church law. An important element of Boy's self-creation were his attitude to France, relationship with this country and decorations awarded to him by the French government. As in the case of the Polish press, the French press was also a tool which it purposefully used by Boy. This issue is described in more detail in the third and last part of the work, **Image**. This part, slightly different from the others, is based on methods customarily used in media studies, but not in literary studies. The use of this method was explained by the interdisciplinary nature of the work and the need to analyze the press of the interwar period – which, in turn, is justified by the fact that in the analyzed period it was the main medium reaching the largest number of recipients.

In order to show the contrast of Boy's public image in the media, the French and Polish press from a similar period, i.e. from the 1920s and 1930s, was analyzed. The terms that journalists used to describe Boy ranged from "genius" to "provocateur", from "amazing" to "hideous". It is puzzling that, both in the press on the Vistula River and on the Seine, Boy Żeleński aroused great emotions, did not leave anyone indifferent, diligently used the opportunity to show himself (or fought with the image he created). In order to slightly soften this "press" image of Żeleński, the last fragment was devoted to the image that others, including people close to him, had about him. These memories, however, do not allow the coherent image of Boy to be crystallized, but merely signal the need to prepare a volume of memories about Tadeusz Żeleński, similar to those prepared about Kazimierz Wierzyński, Julian Tuwim or Maria Pawlikowska Jasnorzewska.

The end of the dissertation prompts reflection on two issues that may become the reason for another query and to examine Boy's fate in Lviv. The first issue concerns the attempt to answer the question posed in the title of the dissertation and at the same time is an incentive to "read" Boy suspiciously, it is an observation that can be summarized in the simplest question: "What if Boy invented everything differently?", The second one concerns information found in Boy-Żeleński's personal file kept in the University Archives in Lviv, it is a kind of epilogue, entitled “The Last Self-Creation”. The discovered documents are also a pretext for new considerations on the employment of Żeleński at the University of Lviv and the come back to the final months of Boy's life. This issue has not been discussed so far.