

Border, contour, fragment – Haupt's strolls between the world, the other, utopia and text

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Forgetting for a moment what we know about various contexts and interpretations of Haupt's work – the body of literature on Haupt is constantly growing – let us turn to the sources of his prose. However, not in the sense of early works, sources of inspirations and borrowings; the last short stories from the only volume published when Haupt was still alive leads us towards images and events from earliest childhood, like a reversed autobiography. Although those memories are extracted from the depths of memory with some difficulty, there is a clear observation at the very beginning:

Not much reached us from that side of the **perimeter**. There was the Austrian **border**, so **on this side** there were finances, and **on the other side** of the Zbrucz – *soldat* with a spear. In Russia the military worked as **border** guards, something like KOP [Corp of Borderlands Protection – PZ]. But then the war came and it was all to become somewhat **blurred**. So first of all, the names of towns and cities ran closer. Before, there were only Wołoczyska and Podwołoczyska, but now there is also Żmerynka, and Wapniarka, and Winnica, and Kamieniec Podolski, and Płoskirów. But **that country** remained **that country**, and **here** was **here**. **Here** was Jagielnica and Probużna, and

Skąła, and Borszczów, and Ułaszkwice, where I was born. Where I spent the earliest years of my childhood (BD 427, highlights by me, A.N.)¹.

This opening suggests that borders and borderability were categories which first of all, shaped Haupt's worldview, and secondly, are forever connected with spatial vividness of differentiating, the division into "here" and "there", "mine/ours" and "someone's/nobody's". There is more to those dichotomies: although in both cases Haupt characterizes spaces using the names of local towns and villages, but only when he describes the foreign land does he stress its linguistic (and dynamic) character through the phrase "the names of towns and cities ran closer", whereas what is "here" seems to be more physical and tangible. The rigid, partitionist border remains in consciousness despite later changes, despite marching armies (which often appear in Haupt's prose) and traumatic, personal war experiences. Podolia is occupied by the Russian army, an alien world taking over the intimate, closest surroundings; moreover, there is a comment concerning the definiteness and permanence of borderlands delimitations, "it was all to become somewhat **blurred**" (highlight mine, A.N.). We thus know that the border type was significant for the original shape of Haupt's identity idea— something classified as "formal, physiographical" by geographers, assuming that there are also "natural" borders (such as the Zbrucz), as every single border is a product of the human mind². Additionally, the border indicated by Haupt is linear, complex and permanent, rather than zonal, simple, and changeable. It is thus an exceptionally distinctive marker, which is moreover related to civilizational divisions in Haupt's prose. What is mine/ours is on the western side of the "perimeter", and "there" is on the eastern side.

In *Z Roksonalii* [From Roksolania] Haupt revisits this issue, trying to define the territory of "here" – one he could identify with, but this will always be limited to shifts in the civilizational barrier between the West and the East, rather than drawing a detailed map of the area that interests him. However, this does not mean undermining its relatively constant status, as a border – according to geographical definitions – is "a line or zone which separates fragments of space within a defined period of time", or more generally: "it is a geometrical form (a line or zone) which conventionally separates fragments of spacetime from one another"³. However, although explorers and conquerors of the eastern territories of the First Polish Republic could not specify the borders, "they did not look at what was under their feet, they imagined some «Ultima Thule»" (ZR 140), the "strangers" who represented the upcoming modernity established clear borders – even if some were unjust, not taking into consideration linguistic or national nuances. Haupt mentions de Beauplan's maps, the Curzon line, but the border from the fragment cited above has a similar character: first partitionist, then separating the Second Polish Republic from Russia. However, it illustrates a different way of thinking about borders, from before the scientific, military, and political precision; borders treated as a zone, limes, frontier or borderlands, which – similarly

¹ All quotes are from the following editions of Haupt's prose: Zygmunt Haupt, *Baskijski diabeł. Opowiadania i reportaże* [Basque devil. Short stories and reportages], edited by Aleksander Madyda, introduction by Andrzej Stasiuk (Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2016), henceforth BD; Zygmunt Haupt, *Z Roksolanii, Opowiadania, eseje, reportaże, publicystyka, warianty, fragmenty (1935–1975)* [From Roksolania. Short stories, essays, reportages, articles, variants, fragments], edited by Aleksander Madyda (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 2018), henceforth ZR. Quotes from Haupt's texts from Stanford University archives (Zygmunt Haupt papers, M0356. Dept. of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.) are marked as ZHP, with catalogue location.

² See Jerzy Bański, "Granica w badaniach geograficznych – definicja i próby klasyfikacji" [Border in geographical studies – definitions and classifications], *Przegląd Geograficzny* vol. 4 (2010): 503.

³ Bański, 492.

to the Roman frontiers – protect from “foreigners” and serve as a passage between the world of different civilizations⁴, contrary to a sharp cut associated with “boundaries” or “borders”⁵. However, there is no doubt that the east border of Haupt’s homeland is precise, and many of his works reveal the basis of this precision related to his disillusionment with the world “on the other side”: in *Z Roksolanii*, *Lutnia* [Lute], *Perekotypołe*, *Coup de grâce*, *Meldunek o nieprzybyciu Wełnowskiego* [Report on Wełnowski’s non-arrival], *Balon* [Balloon] Haupt creates the linguistic reality of “that country” as a world that can be conceptualized through categories proposed by Koneczny, Halecki and Huntington. At the same time there is no intermediate zone, the eastern border seen like this would resemble other geographical definitions, according to which e.g. it is “a vertical surface crossing a border delineated on the ground, separating the territory of one state from other states or no-man’s areas”, or even introduce visual elements to the definition, such as “an imagined curtain separating states and no-man’s areas”⁶.

At first glance, the world of Haupt’s protagonist is clearly separated from what is foreign, but only apparently separated from other “own”, specific areas from Roksolania: Żółkiew, Lviv, Zaborze, Gorgany, Stryj. But how to delineate this area if this protagonist, while travelling west, notes his presence in borderland areas, e.g. “where the ethnographic Lemko language can be heard even in Beskid Wyspowy” (BD 257), and “chładowski land belongs to the area of the ethnic borderland”, where the border is elusive because it **“meanders somewhere”** (BD 467, highlight mine, A.N.), or observes that the “podbeskidzki piece of Dzikie Pola” (ZR 131) exists in the reality of People’s Poland? On the one hand, he clearly juxtaposes the remnants of “a small fragment of latyczowski district left on the west side” (ZR 123) with other parts of Poland, writing that its architecture does not correspond with the Polish landscape, and on the other hand – he is unwilling to delineate the west borders of this piece of land. And so he transfers the border zone concept, characteristic for historical Polish understanding of space, which allows the interpenetration of Polish and Russian (in the historical sense of this word) elements.

⁴ Haupt’s note about the Peace of Riga is interesting in this context: “Professor-prime minister dictating the Soviets peace conditions in 1920 gave up the «cordoned» Podolia with Kamieniec offered to him by the Soviet delegation. But the contemporary Polish military saved a strategic, 40-kilometer-wide belt from the Jagiellonian Eastern borderlands, east from Lida, Baranowicze, Łuniniec, Równe railroad, hence the shape of the Polesie border. Had Podolia been «cordoned» as part of interwar Poland, then perhaps the escaping Soviet tanks would not have even reached the Zbrucz in September, and this may have changed that war’s outcome. What-if’s, what-if’s...” (ZHP, box 10, folder 10). Haupt’s geopolitical consciousness was influenced by geographical politics which was developing dynamically (mostly in Central and Eastern Europe) from early 20th century to the interwar period. Maciej Górny offers an interesting perspective in *Kreślarze ojczyzn. Geografowie i granice międzywojennej Europy* [Mapmakers of motherlands. Geographers and borders of interwar Europe] (Warszawa: IH PAN, 2017). For a discussion of Haupt’s idea of borders in spite of temporary political interests, see Michał Klimecki, “Granica na Zbruczu 1918-1939 r.” [The Zbrucz border], in *Granice i świat współczesny* [Borders and contemporary world], edited by Zbigniew Karpus, Beata Stachowiak (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 2010).

⁵ See John Robert Victor Prescott, *Political Frontiers and Boundaries* (London: Routledge Library, 1987), 1–57. Prescott introduces significant differentiations, explaining that borderlands are not the same as borders, simultaneously signaling the presence of internal “borderlands”. In this context, the term “boundaries” would be closer to the “cordoned” reality from Haupt’s short story. A clearer conceptualization of this issue can be found in Hastings Donnan, Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*, translated into Polish by Małgorzata Grajper-Głowacka (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2007), in which the authors, referring to e.g. Prescott, propose a different terminological practice: border is associated with countries, frontier – with borderlands, and boundaries – with material and social determinants of borderlands. Referring to Ladis Kristof, they stress the significant difference between boundary and frontiers (Donnan, Wilson, 71, 73). As a result we are dealing with a clear-cut division: on the one hand there are formal terms (border), on the other – the borderlands area (frontier), and the term boundary is the broadest, it refers to many types of social boundaries with a material-spatial character, as well as to social and symbolic boundaries imagined by individuals and groups (Donnan, Wilson, 37).

⁶ Bański, 491.

However, this perspective has its limits, which materializes in one of Haupt's short stories: the Zbąszyń train station, located at the border, where the protagonist arrives from his trip to Paris. During his train journey he notes, similarly to the case of the cordoned reality, the names of places located between France and Poland: "Already after one day there was Charleroi, then Aachen, Essen, Hamm, Stendal – a foreign country" (BD 226)⁷. For Haupt's protagonist, the country's border – modeled after the first one he experienced – is always a clear barrier, which is also connected with entering subsequent stages-areas of life. Haupt scrupulously notes each and every time it is crossed, his thoughts circulate around such facts and keep returning to them. This is also the case with his episode from the September Campaign (an internment camp in Hungary, when the border is crossed "at a loss and with bitterness", BD 680), trips to the Polish army in France (an episode from *Baskijski diabeł*), evacuation to England⁸, additionally connected to the first encounter with "a new element", or in the case of crossing the Atlantic to go to Louisiana. Subsequent borders on the way to the West move him further away from his homeland, and going east is impossible, with one exception from before the war, i.e. returning from Paris to "arcadia"⁹; as if that protagonist "bounced off" the impassable barrier on the Zbrucz, of which he had been aware since early childhood.

Curiously, while moving west, despite the visible, linear, precise borders, Haupt creates buffer zones which help deal with survival trauma and highlight the fact that all the places visited by the protagonist finds belong to the same civilizational area – just as when Haupt was tracing relations between different Polish regions. This is the role played by the sea, territories of Hungary, (the former) Yugoslavia, Italy and France on the way to the Anglo-Saxon world. Even the tragedy of leaving the homeland is modeled by the awareness of shared space on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains, created thanks to "our Ukrainian Piedmonteses" (ZR 342)¹⁰. The barrier separating the West from the East, its chaos and anarchist-totalitarian societies, is the only impassable border, a frontline. Hence in his early prose (with a subtitle "a didactic story") Haupt creates ułhan Czuchnowski, originally a man without a past. Facts "**partitioning**" his life are not a barrier that would protect him from "dullness". Only after serving at the border (both Polish and Scottish) is he radically transformed. Czuchnowski, crossing also the Polish-Hungarian border in Rachov, is aware that a different frontier is more important: "He was guarding good from evil. He served most selflessly" (BD 187). That axiological element is almost the same as the topographic determinants of the border. And whenever it is impossible, we are dealing with anxiety stemming from the lack of borders, with invasion of the elements which introduce disorder in the spacetime established in the protagonist's mind thanks to borders.

⁷ This foreignness is also related to the presence of swastikas on chimneys. In the pre-war reportage *Aspekt Śląska* [Silesia's aspect] Haupt clearly notes the character of the autonomous Silesia – borderland, and in connection with the Polish-German conflict.

⁸ *W drodze na morzu* [En route by the sea] and *Kawaler z morskiej pianki* [Bachelor from sea foam] showcase the cartographic-geometric type of imagination in border creation: "The distant sea shore already seems like dead, uninhabited land, oblique rocks of St-Jean-de-Luz, all similar in their smoothness and inclination, resemble a geometrical solid, mathematical walls" (BD 168); "Regardless of how you look at it, there is land here, drought, solid land, and further away, on the other side, the flat sea starts, running away – moving, leaking, distant sea. [...] Lines running like hypsometric layers, the sea approaches them, drooling like an infant. And this is where this line of dirt comes from" (BD 388).

⁹ Haupt's travels from after the war were not reflected in any of his literary and paraliterary works.

¹⁰ Haupt writes that "nothing has been known about it" (ZR 342) [i.e. Transcarpathia], but simultaneously provides information which shows that this is not true. Ukrainians, portrayed differently on different stages of Haupt's career, are classified as the West here. It is significant that the two initial paragraphs cited at the beginning of this paper were translated into Ukrainian by Haupt (ZHP, box 10, folder 10).

W Paryżu i w arkadii [In Paris and in arcadia] is the perfect example of such a mechanism. Both spaces – Parisian and Polish – are seen in the context of chaos; street advertisements in Paris, the rhythm with which they appear in memory resembles marching Great War armies. Disorder of the metropolis and disorder of the war do not allow to define the area observed by the protagonist. In the short story, moving round Paris is presented through a series of randomly listed places, whereas the events of the war are taking place in some unnamed space of an Eastern borderlands town and its area, which are not idyllic, compromising its “arcadian” character. “The town seems to have shrunk”, “as if looked at through flipped binoculars, there is a sense of calmness and sadness” (BD 224). But Paris can be tamed as well. Unlike in *W Paryżu i w arkadii*, in *Fluctuat nec mergitur* Haupt opens with precisely delineated borders of the area that interests him:

Paris is shaped elliptically. Avenue des Champs-Élysées, rue de Rivoli, rue de Faubourg St-Antoine comprise its long axis, with a short, perpendicular axis: boulevard Sebastopol and boulevard St-Michel. Boulevards surrounding the center, La Cité, are elliptical concentric rings. On the west there is Bois de Boulogne, on the east – the Vincennes forest. On the north Montmartre, and on the south – Montparnasse. We will not get lost (BD 651).

The text, concentrated on the dynamics and chaos of the Parisian lifestyle, closes the image of Paris’s “borders, *octroi*” (the latter are internal customs offices which functioned in Paris up until 1948). Haupt’s description seals the area which – even if we treat the rules of modern urban planning dogmatically – has a strong inclination towards fluid transformation into suburbia. In reference to the Polish space, portrayed similarly as a reality of contrasts, the same literary device can be found in the form of Żółkwia’s tollgates (as well as its walls, an additional separating factor) – a city that used to be perfect, and whose streets are now covered in sewage. It seems that delineating borders of each area within some civilizational unity constitutes a remedy to vagueness, anonymity, and chaos. Everywhere he goes, Haupt’s protagonist no longer draws a line separating two worlds, but a border that would give a specific shape, outline, contour of the reality that is being experienced, starting from a fragment of one of his “Parisian” stories about the need to familiarize oneself with the area within a 20-kilometer radius in order to comfortably function within it. Haupt’s internal borders constitute the formula of specifying everything that is “here”, what is within the perceptive capabilities of a subject that learns about the world through their senses. This is why in Haupt’s prose we are dealing with constant drawing of “small” borders, and it is not predominantly in the metaphorical sense, with marking the area of “separated” houses, woods, hunting areas, estates, farmlands, tollgates, the order of their districts and worlds (*To ja sam jestem Emmą Bovary* [I am Emma Bovary]), “separate” villages (such as Łosie), closed spaces of gardens (*Ogród Jezuicki* [Jesuit garden], *Rigor mortis*).

When Haupt shifts the focus to the earliest Podolia memories, he also shows how difficult it is to organize space based on clear delimitation. Despite that vagueness capitulates, even if it is expressed in a cut ellipsis which concludes the paragraph. Grammatically this sentence is the equivalent of the spacious frontier; the infinity of language – just as the infinity of landscape – is cut short:

It is incredibly difficult to understand the topography of that region, the area of Czarnokoniec. Until today I have an impression of an endless plane, but the memory of those steep ravine walls,

a small chapel at the feet of shale rocks, with a stream flowing from under its threshold, an amazing impression of full, green summer (BD 40).

The ravine walls are a border of that plane, further reinforced by the town of Probużna, “the capital and Metropolic for forty kilometers around”.

In Haupt’s prose the process of distinguishing and separating smaller areas starts at the beginning of his mature works. It is connected to his attempts at delineating the frontier remembered from childhood, and thus he tries to “manufacture its definition” (BD 573). Subsequent images of that country, as if “glued” to the civilizational border and mockingly dubbed as *Arschhöhle* by Austrian officers allow not only to see its contour and “internal” richness, but also to form a significant directive of literary work:

One has to separate oneself from that space, as if it was not difficult and impossible, to say to oneself: here is here, and there is there. To be an objective master to oneself. To segregate, but not systematically, as once can get lost in those systems created systems’ sake, but to divide and to say that things are different (BD 575).

And so the separation actions undertaken by Haupt have a local character, and at the same time they help escape from the traps of modernity which make everything look the same. It is not about efforts to put everything in order, which seems impossible due to the limits to individual spatial experience, nor is it about creating autonomous fragments of the world in such a way as to make them reflect some unobtainable whole – it is about “making things different”, i.e. confronting their specificities with one another, and thus about proving the unobtainable, unobvious integrity of a bordered territory of a range which is difficult to imagine.

Such actions can be found throughout Haupt’s works, they transform into an obsession – not visible at first glance, but intensely present – with distinguishing, separating, loneliness, which concerns both people and objects. A city house “separate and lonely like a gloomy rock in shallow sea water” (BD197), a seaside house from another short story is “abandoned”, “pushed away” (BD 415), people – always separate and mysterious. When Haupt characterizes the world of individual characters, he does it in a way that resembles how he characterizes space, he isolates individuals and creates “laboratory” conditions for studying them:

I would like to work on them one by one, select, pull them out from the mass and the crowd. Take a good look, throw some light on them to see what they are really like. Enough generalizing, collective thinking and seeing! Take them one by one, as if each one were unique, to see for myself that indeed they are unique specimens. The same as this one, and that one. A truly separate person, truly the only one (BD 565).

There is an apparent contradiction in this declaration. The other is the same, and yet separate, standing out, specific. Haupt uses a device resembling his attempts at characterizing specific spaces when, while describing what is foreign, he often reaches for analogies with the familial. If, while writing about the relationship between self and the other, he asks the

fundamental question: “Where is the line between myself and the other?” (BD 567), this question is extended to “where is the line between myself and the world, of which the other is an autonomous particle?”. Just as space is cognizable only in a specific dimension of areas that can be delineated, a small town in the Eastern borderlands where the protagonist arrives (significantly) for a geodetic internship, and scrupulously measures fragments of its space, as well as social, national, and religious groups in order to isolate one person, the titular “Emma Bovary”, confronting her alleged way of perceiving reality with his own, Haupt singles out individuals from the abyss of modern mass, and portrays them in detail. Haupt’s “here is here, and there is there” has at least two dimensions; one concerns the physical space and experiencing it at its source, whereas the other one is an attempt at drawing the line between self and everything external to it¹¹. It is characteristic that both forms of demarcations can be found in initial and final parts of *Fragmenty*, respectively. But although the categorical character of formal borders dividing space raises no doubts, those dividing self from the world are sometimes questioned in this prose – but it seems that only in order to highlight their necessity even further. When Haupt writes in the final parts that “One time I will be one with the whole, and another time I will be alone, completely alone, nothing else will matter, only me. I will feel as if the world and I were one” (BD 440), he goes from a blurred identity to a delineated, defined one: “the world and I are the same” does not mean being lost in the abyss of reality, but, to the contrary, singling self out from the mass of phenomena.

“Separate from space” – this is much easier for Haupt’s protagonist than drawing a line between his own and the other’s self-awareness; it even seems that Haupt makes a certain effort by signaling the possibility of a shared territory of two people, antagonized against everything beyond this utopian unity, in his love stories¹². However, there is a significant doubt related to that, which tips the scales and makes Haupt’s protagonist’s existence a chain of activities leading to establishing borders. The laconic “But why persuade, invent, multiply – you are here by yourself” appears in the context of emotional engagement, repeated in a similar form and separated in the text: “But why lie, make up – you are here by yourself” (BD 525). A love story is an exposition of an individual perspective rather than an expression of a perfect unity of two people. On its margin, Haupt will develop his half-poetic theory about the sky as the only space connecting individuals:

the only thing they have in common is the sky, stars, clouds. Everything else: planes, grasslands, hills, mountains, cliffs, seas, rivers, all that crust, so varied, scum, all those pits, bulges, abysses, plants, soils, swamps, wetlands, tundra, forests, woods, dunes, deltas, limans, all these “reliefs”

¹¹Haupt introduces further divisions here, within self, in many places highlighting the segmental character of the protagonist’s existence, e.g. writing about the seven-year metabolic cycle, or stressing “separated” experiences – what is interesting, also related to territorial divisions of “own” space from foreign space, e.g. “A very isolated memory of that, because I am far away from my place, a memory very cut out, separate like an amateur snapshot glued on a page in a photo album. A few amateur days of life spent separately” (BD 259).

¹²See e.g. “It is wonderful and delightful, and separately on the court’s rectangle cut off from the world with a net, one can forget about everything, the world is left on the other side, and here only the two of us, and **nothing** and **nobody** else, locked in the geometrical rectangle and us, only us, and the rest – as if cut off with a knife. It does not matter; it does not exist. This isolation is artificial, but accidentally it helps and brings satisfaction” (BD 266, highlights mine, A.N.). Or: “And so here in Maruszka’s arms I forgot about the world piling up, as if it was not there, [...] here it was only us, and there the world was rubbish, tall-told [...]” (BD 293).

and “floras”, damn it! everything so varied, momentarily seems so foreign and distant, and overseas to someone used to their own. And it is enough to raise your head, look at the vast sky, familiar to everyone and shared by everyone (BD 524).

We should also notice that Haupt, who had vast general knowledge, especially about the natural environment, must have known that the sky looks different depending on the latitude. This reference is probably supposed to create another differentiating figure, to draw another border. At first it may seem like a demarcation line between immanence and transcendence (a perfect relationship of two people contains a transcendent element); this is supported by the variant of the already cited opening of *Fragmenty*, in which Haupt establishes borders as a significant element of his own perception of the world:

Right behind the fence there was the railway embankment. For the first time I had seen the horizon lifted and pressed evenly on the sky. A peculiar world, not forgotten, a mathematical straight line separating the solid earth from the sky. The thick line of tracks cut in the sky, sharply, separating. It seemed like it had been going on since the beginning of the world. It was in the evening, one without a sunset, fire, and light, in some strange garden, and that evening that hard line of the railway track, cutting off the length, diversity, solidity, familiarity of the world from the sky, atomized, scattered, misty-spacious, cloudy and evening (ZHP, box 9, folder 4).

Thereby the vision of the sky as a meeting place with the other is deconstructed. Earth can be systematized, or at least divided according to the topographic and natural variety, the sky is characterized by a series of epithets suggesting an incognizable abyss. Haupt is clearly attached to immanence, as this is the territory where he is able to delineate areas that can be described. Perhaps the cited fragment did not make it to the final version due to the fact, that it stresses the barrier separating immanence and transcendence too obviously, it relies on a schematic, symbolic division¹³. However, in Haupt’s works what is related to the “solidness” of earth does not enjoy the status of a safe world either. Just as the sky disperses borders, it is a “scattered” and simultaneously unified reality, the human reality can sink into entropy; Haupt starts the short story opening his first planned collection of prose with a threat of entropy. In order to avert it, differences need to be articulated. Hence “my country is a country of four seasons” (BD 22), and the spatiotemporal borders related to times and places become delimitation lines of the text’s fragments, the last one about the escape of two people running away from the implied, ravishing idyll of the sky. And so the world of borders is suspended between two undifferentiated spaces, and although one may be associated with a utopian “paradise”, and the other one is a consequence of social and civilizational transformations, they both take the form of anti-utopia precisely because they leave no place for creative activity that would differentiate and delineate.

¹³Those symbolic senses are further reinforced by one more element: the tracks function as a borderline, and the final sentences of the cited fragment are: “And then a train passed, a goods train, with tufts of steam, smoke, and exhaust fumes stuck to it. With all the solidness of boxes of cargo cars against the background of the sky, exaggerated out of earthly proportions, in the rattle and metallic clangor of bumpers and chains. A train, spotted in the evening, for the first time from the backyard of someone else’s house...”. Being “out of earthly proportions” and at the same time “against the background of the sky” suggests moving along the border rather than across it, attachment to the border as a connecting rather than dividing factor.

The reality of entropy appears one more time, in the short story *Warianty* [Variants], published around the same time as *Fragmenty*, where Haupt articulates his directive of the necessity to “separate self from space”, and where he writes: “There are no two identical things in the world” (BD 572). This brings us back to the claim that in Haupt’s works borders and frontiers are source experiences, and at the same time a category which describes his creative strategy well. In the early stages of his mature writing it takes another form, whose presence has been implied here. In the fuller version of *Stypa* [Funeral reception] published alongside *Fragmenty* and *Warianty* in 1950, which also refers to childhood memories, a father explains to his son where the place name Batiatycze comes from; it is a story about a Cossack granted an estate as a reward for finding king Sobieski, who got lost in the woods. Sobieski allegedly declared that:

he can claim as much land from these woods as he manages to encircle riding on a horse within a day. As soon as he heard that, the Cossack took a horse for himself, and a pack horse for a gleep with bags full of poles for marking the border, and gee up! And they would stop every so often, and the Cossack would yell: “Batia! Tyczy!”¹⁴, and his assistant would place a pole in the ground. And this is where the name Batiatycze comes from (BD 727).

The authenticity of those events is doubtful. The protagonist explains to himself, that since this is not real life, it has to be art, as life does not comply with the rules of composition. And at the same time he states: “I was afraid of being forced by art” (BD 727). What he likely means by that is being forced to compose events, to put together fragments and variants, and thus also to establish borders, a heroic activity which prevents from being lost in the entropic chaos, or in the paradise unity of objects and people. According to the story, the place got its name from the activity of demarcating a border. In Haupt’s world delimitation simultaneously limits physical space and creates it. However, identifying the line between “life” and literary fiction seems to be more important here. Using his geodetic knowledge, Haupt writes that life is not “function material” or “a type of nomogram”. And wherever something made up appears, dividing tools need to be used; it needs to be organized regardless of how skeptical we are about such activities. But in some way “life” is similar to art, despite the tangible barrier between them – its existence provokes copying it in literature.

As can be seen, various ways of understanding borders are present in the early stages of Haupt’s mature works. Starting from lines dividing physical space, at the same time investigating the border between self and everything else, between the reality of diversity and (unreality) of anti-utopias, and finally: between the world and a text. It may thus be said that in an attempt at establishing the framework for Haupt’s geopoetics, we are moving from the geozone to poiesis¹⁵. It may also be said that the four types of basic delimitations which appear in

¹⁴Wordplay – “Batia” is the assistant’s name, and “tyczy” is the archaic imperative form of “wytyczać”, i.e. to demarcate [PZ].

¹⁵Haupt’s prose proves that Rybicka, who tries to precisely articulate the place of two spheres in the geopoetics discourse, is correct: the «geo» zone is not only the subject and product of literary and cultural poetic practices. «Geo» can be the same driving force as poiesis” (Elżbieta Rybicka, *Geopoetyka. Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich* [Geopoetics. Space and place in contemporary literary theories and practices] [Kraków: Universitas, 2014], 93).

Haupt's short stories provoke further divisions, on both sides of demarcation lines, with one exception: the penultimate case, in which neither transcendence nor entropy allow to impose internal borders on self. And the remaining demarcation lines prove a reduced sense of the existence of the Whole through a peculiar symmetry related to the ability to delineate borders in one's homeland and in a foreign country, stages of one's own existence and social barriers, limited perspectives of playing specific roles in life, and constructing textual anecdotes.

Actually all those borders can be found in *Fragmenty*. The Zbrucz soon becomes a line separating the first five years of the protagonist's childhood from the rest of his life ("five years of small life separated and cut off in memory"), which are called "detached small pieces" (one of them, not included in the final draft, tells us about the impassable line between earth and sky), and – as we soon find out – they are not an obstacle in establishing a frontier separating it (already fragmented) from the diversity of the world presented in the titular textual "fragments".

In many works by Haupt it is possible to trace the process of establishing and at the same time crossing borders; they only seem to be contradictory. Haupt noted in the margins of a characteristic of his own work that "being a poet means crossing the line" (ZR 166), it means carrying "one's privileges" "across all cordons" – but this transgressive movement of imagination is only possible in a world with borders, where they are delineated by the "poet" himself. Perhaps the secret of his literature lies in the impossibility to breach only one cordon: the one separating immanence from transcendence. "Why was man placed between two extreme sadnesses-fears? Claustrophobia and agoraphobia. The fear of confinement and the fear of space. Which one is worse?" (ZR 349) – asks Haupt in his unfinished short story. However, it should be mentioned that normally confinement does not cause any suffering for Haupt's protagonists, and they are able to tame open space through dividing it with borders. Therefore "agoraphobia" concerns the abyss of chaos or (in a reversed perspective of looking) – the abyss of the sky.

Haupt's borders – physical, existing on maps, as well as imagined by him – almost directly translate into the process of text fragmentation, which consists of genetically diverse areas, such as descriptions, anecdotes, characteristics, comments (always referring to a locum). All of them are ready-to-use elements, building blocks for constructing the countries of Haupt's short stories. It is a finite repertoire which he operates so skillfully that he cannot be accused of schematism. In other words, he "dresses" obsessively recurring themes in the robes of spatial categories, in which borders play the key role. Finally, let us trace those devices in Haupt's writing technique, variants of one unfinished story, which – just as *Fragmenty* – opens with an image of a river separating different territories.

Three short fragments of (most likely) one, planned short story, with a recurring image of the Bug as a river separating two worlds, can be found in Haupt's archive. The most elaborate one is the beginning of a story about the protagonist's Sunday trip with three companions undergoing military training "to Kodeń [in order to] see the miraculous image of Madonna Kodeńska" (ZR 335). In the first parts of the text the protagonist is mostly interested in the proving range, located "between the Bug and the Muchawiec in a gore created by the two rivers, crossed by two roads leading to Brześć" (ZR 332). In the other two short variants we see

the Bug upon Krystynopol and Sokal; in the former only the very existence of the river dividing two banks is highlighted, and in the latter, confronted with the motif of a ruined bridge, puts the alleged theme of an unfinished story to the fore:

Love is like a shattered bridge.

Of course what I mean is tragic, unfulfilled love – because this is the only true love (ZHP, box 9, folder 8).

Paradoxically, we are able to say the least about the thematic dominant feature of the longest preserved fragment; we do not know whether the horse ride to Kodeń is supposed to be treated as a pretext, or whether Haupt was going to focus on the related anecdote. Such a loose attitude to factuality and moving events and characters to turn them into a background for very different, seemingly unrelated worldview constructions¹⁶ is common in Haupt's prose. Based on the presence of specific protagonists (Emil Milowicz, Księżycki, Góralczyk) and military exercises it is likely that the two variants were written around the same time as *Lili Marleen* in which the motif of ethnic frontier is also highlighted – probably in late 1960s. In the longest one Haupt writes:

That proving range was located where a few lands met: to the east, Polesie, to the south Wołyń, and on the other side, ethnographically cut clean by the river, Podlasie with its inhabitants – definitely Poles (ZR 333).

Thee proving range, situated so specifically, has its own – although untight – borders, which means that people can leave it “on Sunday afternoons, escape far away, without superiors droning on about duty, discipline, restraint, logics, all that sophisticated military bullshit” (ZR 336). Haupt juxtaposes the borders of military (as well as political) orders with ethnographic and physiographic ones¹⁷. They are the starting point, although he is imprecise in his demarcations (Polesie also stretches to the north, and the area on the other bank of the Bug was not exclusively Polish – even before the partition it belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) – the goal is artistic rather than factual. Physical borders have the same function within the text: stories about the proving range and episodes in military life, stories about the frontier with a story about a stubborn peasant crossing the dangerous river at night with a cart, and finally the proper story, of which we only receive the following fragment:

It is wild and sylvan. Finally you can see a clearing and some rooftops: a farm in the middle of the forest. Such a mid-forest farm is very different from village and inter-human ones [...] (ZR 336).

Cut, a line between the forest wall and a clearing, an outlined, separate farm is at the same time a delineation between a fulfilled and unfulfilled intention. All three preserved fragments concentrate three basic thematic fields of Haupt's writing around the borders motif:

¹⁶For a longer discussion, see Aleksander Madyda, *Haupt. Monografia* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 2012), 211-289.

¹⁷I.e. borders which redirect our attention to zones.

exploration of space, love and military experiences. Based on that we can guess how this unfinished short story, which consists of prefabricates-areas characteristic for Haupt, could end. Did Haupt's protagonist associate the forest farm with another story including a for-ester's lodge, as a pretext for revisiting a love story? Or perhaps the girl encountered there would be associated with Nietota? Did resting in that place prevent him from crossing the Bug and reaching Kodeń, was it connected to the ruined bridge symbolizing love? Or maybe Kodeń and the Madonna painting, once stolen by Sapieha from a Roman church, would be a pretext for a story similar to *Lutnia*, incorporated into the future, planned cycle *Geografia Polski* [Poland's geography], simultaneously a history of Poland? The area which Haupt writes about (perhaps this was the reason for moving the plot from Krystynopol and Sokal to Brześć, and the subtle modification of physiographic and ethnographic details), also crosses the borders of three historical parts of Poland, and the Sapiehas could play a similar role to the one played by the Żółkiewskis in *Lutnia* (the family is both connected to the Grand Duchy and Rawski's areas, both close to Haupt). At the same time it situates the painting on the "Polish" side of the Bug.

All these ideas regarding possible ending scenarios do not remove the starting point from sight – the border between fulfillment and unfulfillment, which also absorbs other nuances of delimitation which we have already listed: dividing specific space, the line between self and the other symbolized by the destroyed bridge, the line between immanence and transcendence (perhaps facing Madonna from Kodeń is too much for the protagonist and Haupt saw it as overly devotional), and finally the borders of the text and borders within it.

The protagonist of one of the variants highlighting the Bug's borderline character on the one hand admires the stubborn peasant crossing the river contrary to common sense, and on the other hand we do not know whether he will decide to cross it on horseback or ferry. We do not know whether he is going to choose Polesie, Wołyń, or the native Polish territory, which somewhat complicates the image of the border. However, elsewhere we find the following divagations:

It is strange to find oneself by the water, by the river. The river divides, here is here, and there is there, there is a different country on that side of the Bug, and a different country on this side. But once you are in its waters, you see the clean, polished sand, so white and sacred that it seems you could only throw it on the floor in a church before grand festivities. And willows and wicker, a separate wicker grove, which has nothing to do with other countries; it belongs to water.

And so it is strange here, among the Bug's waters, among wicker, on piles of sand and shoals. As if I found myself beyond space, because if I can be on both sides of the Bug at the same time, in two countries, my national identity is lost (ZHP, box 9, folder 4).

The border converges with a sense of strangeness, important for Haupt – the only state which allows to invalidate it, if only for a moment. Haupt's rule is to constantly approach it, but moving along it or functioning within it are more important than crossing it. In other words, in Haupt's prose borders have a hypnotizing charm, they captivate with their absolutism, but Haupt – under the influence of specific delimitations – tries to extend the initial area,

the frontier, to see the proper border as its element. It is the only possible way of transcending, touching the foreign, the unknown, also in the metaphysical perspective, without losing touch with what is close and own. Starting from topography and cartography, Haupt translates the physical category into axiology, epistemology, and interpersonal experience, as well as his writing technique. He circulates near different borders in order to – just as many other modern artists – reveal a small particle of the reality outlined and hidden by borders¹⁸, knowing that this is impossible. This is where – as a substitute – the desire to simultaneously be in two, three, or more countries or regions comes from. A border can be a proof of owning Everything, but only when it is seen “from within”. Also in this sense, the Bug – as a border river – simultaneously becomes central, and the border – the center from which one can look in all directions, thus representing the point of cognition of exceptional quality, as Karl Schlögel put it¹⁹.

Through establishing and removing borders, Haupt’s prose proves the presence of a difference, in many cases painful but necessary. “There are no two identical things in the world”. According to Haupt, the art of constructing texts is not to be indifferent about any of them. Haupt, shaped in times when politicians established borders based on arbitrarily interpreted data, could actually repeat after lord Curzon (who did not have good press in Poland), that the evolution of borders is a question of art rather than science due the fact that their forms and manifestations are plastic and prone to external influences. However, we should also bear in mind that “plasticity” has its limits in Haupt’s prose: what might be surprising in the light of modernity rejecting the schematicity of mental constructs, even in the vaguest of frontier areas he would carefully draw a clear line, and reaching it meant a unique cognitive privilege, protecting – for one more moment – from helplessness in the face of what is limitless.

translated by Paulina Zagórska

¹⁸Karl Schlögel, *In Space We Read Time: On the History of Civilization and Geopolitics.*, translated into Polish by Izabela Drozdowska, Łukasz Musiał, introduction by Hubert Orłowski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2009), 142.

¹⁹Donnan, Wilson, 67.

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KEYWORDS

modernity

b o r d e r

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FRAGMENT

ABSTRACT:

The paper discusses the claim that borders and frontiers are a source of experience, and at the same time a category which describes Haupt's prose well. In his works, the border category appears in the form of a line marking clear delimitation, and in the form of a buffer zone between different areas. Haupt translates the geographical-political notion of a border into axiology, epistemology, interpersonal experience and writing techniques. His fascination with borders expresses seeking a convenient place which would allow one to perceive the world and text as a complex order situated on the opposite pole to the undifferentiated chaos of the modern reality.

GEOPOETICS

s p a c e

textual delimitation

Z y g m u n t

H a u p t

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Andrzej Niewiadomski (1965) – poet, essayist, historian of literature. Head of the Department of Modern Polish Literature and Culture at IFP UMCS. Author of numerous papers, mostly on Polish twentieth-century poetry, focusing especially the 2nd Avant-garde, catastrophism, poetry of late 1980s and early 1990s, metapoetic issues, prose by Brunon Schulz, Zygmunt Haupt, geopoetics. Recently he published *Osiemdziesiąt. Studium poezji “przełomów”* [Eighty. A study in the poetry of “breakthroughs”] (Lublin 2020), and *Przeciw entropii, przeciw arkadii. O pisarstwie Zygmunta Haupta* [Against entropy, against arcadia. On Zygmunt Haupt’s writing] (Kraków 2021).