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PROBLEMS WITH NORWID'S UTTERANCES (NOT ONLY)
IN *VADE-MECUM*.
INTERPRETATIVE AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

The subject of this article focuses on, broadly speaking, phenomena of syntactic nature (although, as it will become clear later, the use of the term *syntax* in this context is a certain simplification) which are present in the *Vade-mecum* cycle and important for the understanding of its content. My intention here is not to compile a catalogue, let alone a ranking, of the difficult expressions used in Norwid's masterpiece, but to outline the problems involved in their interpretation, as well as to propose some possible solutions to the existing problems and to present those features of Norwid's sentence-forming practice which – as it seems to me – emerge from the analyses conducted.

1. SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE

The most frequently observed and apparently explicated interpretative problem is the difficulty in grasping and 'deciphering' the structure of Norwid's utterances, which is usually due to the latter's incompatibility with 19th-century structural patterns. This phenomenon is illustrated, *inter alia*, by the following examples from *Vade-mecum*:

- (1) O! ulico, ulico...
Miast, nad którymi Krzyż;

Szyby twoje skrzą się i świecą
Jak źrenice kota, łowiąc mysz (*Stolica [Capital]*, VM 33)¹

(2) Prawda, się razem dochodzi i czeka! (*Idee i prawda [Ideas and Truth]*, VM 57)

(3) Idzie pogrzeb, w ulice splywa boczne
Nie-pogwałconym krokiem;
W ślad mu pójdę, giestem wypocznę,
Wypocznę, okiem...! (*Stolica [Capital]*, VM 33-34)

(4) Tak, flory-badacz, dopełniwszy zielnik,
Gdy z poziomego mchu najmniejszym liściem
Szeptał o śmierciach tworów; chce, nad wnijściem
Księgi, podpisać się... pisze... śmiertelnik! (*Finis*, VM 122)

(1) O! street, o street ...
Of cities above which hovers the Cross;
Your windows glisten and shine
Like cat's pupils, catching a mouse.

(2) Truth needs to be both sought and anticipated!

(3) A funeral cortege drifts into side streets
With an unhurried stride;
I'll follow in its wake, idle my gestures,
Idle – my eye!²...

(4) Thus, a researcher of flora, having completed the herbarium,
When from the level of moss with the smallest leaf
[It] Whispered about the deaths of the creations; wants, over the entrance
Of the book, to lay his signature... he writes... mortal!

¹ Texts cited according to the edition: C. NORWID, *Vade-mecum*, ed. J. Fert, Lublin 2004 (henceforth VM). In quotations and references, the number after the abbreviated title refers to the page number in this edition. In the examples analysed, I have made corrections relevant to the construction of the utterances, partly restoring the texts to their original authorial form based on a scan of the manuscript made available by the National Library (www.polona.pl; see also C. NORWID, "Vade-mecum." *Transliteracja autografu*, ed. and introduction by M. Grabowski, Łódź 2018). The changes mainly concern punctuation, which entirely follows the autograph, and emphasis (Norwid's underlining instead of the italics used by Józef Fert).

² English translation by D. BORCHARDT, in collaboration with A. BRAJERSKA-MAZUR, C. NORWID, *Poems*, New York 2011, p. 37.

The first two quotations contain examples of archaic constructions³. The fragment from *Stolica* [*Capital*](Example 1) seems to present a deviant use of the adverbial participle, which is, after all, semantically linked to *kot* [cat](or, as Mieczysław Jastrun claimed, to *żrenice* [pupils]⁴), while in order to preserve grammatical order (the principle of the identity of the agents of the participle clause and of the superordinate clause) it should be connected with *szyby* [window panes], which is rather nonsensical (although such a vision – windows catching a mouse – was advocated, for instance, by Jacek Trznadel⁵). However, the alleged participle clause can also be interpreted differently – not as an equivalent of the subordinate clause, but as an attributive noun phrase⁶ used in the Middle Polish period⁷, formally identical to the present-day adverbial participle since it ends with *-qc*, but functionally corresponding to adjectival participle (*-qcy*). The analysed passage should thus be understood as follows: ‘the pupils of a cat that catches a mouse’ or – as proposed by e.g. Mieczysław Jastrun – ‘cat’s pupils catching a mouse.’⁸

Another example of syntactic archaism appears in Example (2) – the ending of the poem *Idee i prawda* [*Ideas and Truth*] features a construction with a reflexive

³ For a more detailed discussion of archaic syntactic constructions in Norwid’s writings, see A. KOZŁOWSKA, “Kilka uwag o archaicznych elementach składniowych w tekstach Cypriana Norwida,” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 29: 2011, pp. 99-117.

⁴ See M. JASTRUN, *Gwiazdzisty diament*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 233-234.

⁵ See J. TRZNADEL, *Czytanie Norwida. Próby*, Warszawa 1978, p. 73.

⁶ Such expressions could also serve as predicates and are similar to developing clauses. Teresa Sokołowska mentioned constructions “on the borderline of dependent and independent clauses,” “which can be interpreted in two ways: either as subordinate clauses developing the content of the preceding clause, or as independent clauses starting a new one, e.g. *Pod tenż czas w Orawie wojsko litewskie było i wiele szkód czyniło, pamiętając tę Litwę Orawa*(T. SOKOŁOWSKA, *Funkcje składniowe imiesłowów nieodmiennych w języku polskim XVII wieku*, Wrocław 1976, p. 95). On the possibility of a double – predicative or attributive – interpretation of some of Norwid’s uses of the participle ending with *-qc*, see A. SŁOBODA, “Imiesłowy u Norwida,” *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Językoznawcza*, 2001, Issue 7, pp. 140-143.

⁷ See A. GRYBOSIOWA, *Rozwój funkcji imiesłowów nieodmiennych w języku polskim. Związek z nomen*, Wrocław 1975; T. SOKOŁOWSKA, *Funkcje składniowe imiesłowów nieodmiennych w języku polskim XVII wieku*. Until the 18th century, the relation between the participle and the subject was emphasised by means of punctuation and the conjunctive connection of the participle with the predicate, see A. GRYBOSIOWA, *Rozwój funkcji imiesłowów nieodmiennych w języku polskim*, p. 83.

⁸ See J. PUZYNIŃNA, „Z problemów składni w tekstach poetyckich Norwida (na materiale ‘Vade-mecum’),” in: J. PUZYNIŃNA, *Słowo Norwida*, Wrocław 1990, p. 100. On the function of participles in Norwid’s texts, see also A. CIOLEK, „Imiesłowowe równoważniki zdań w listach C. K. Norwida,” *Poradnik Językowy*, 2015, Issue 7, pp. 23-31.

form of the verb (incl. *się*) that grammatically agrees with the nominative. The peculiarity of this usage lies in the fact that the nominative – in the function of the subject – does not denote the performer of the action, but its object. Thus: ‘do prawdy się dochodzi i na nią się czeka’ [the truth is reached and waited for]. Similar sentences with a non-agentive nominative acting as the subject, common in Old Polish, in the 17th and 18th centuries gradually were transitioning into the category of subjectless clauses; the personal reflexive form of the verb was replaced by an impersonal form homonymous with it, and the nominative was replaced by the corresponding dependent case (*ziemia się uprawia* → *ziemię się uprawia*; *prawda się dochodzi* → *prawdy się dochodzi* [Nominative→Accusative])⁹.

Example (3) is an instance of Norwid’s syntactic innovations. Neither today, nor in the 19th century, does the verb *wypocząć* [to rest, to idle] combine with the instrumental case (*giestem, okiem* [with a gesture, with an eye]). Thanks to the use of such an unconventional combination, the poet achieved an interesting effect, highlighting the aspects or dimensions – or causes, as such an interpretation is also possible – of the projected “rest/idle.”

In Example (4), on the other hand, we can find an anacoluthon typical of Norwid’s many utterances – the poet changes the subject of the sentence without signalling this at all. Initially, the reference is made to the researcher, but the clause beginning with *gdy* (“Gdy z poziomego mchu najmniejszym liściem / Szeptał o śmierciach tworów” [When from the level of moss with the smallest leaf / Whispered about the death of creations]) refers not to him, but to the herbarium, while the next two clauses: “chce, nad wnijsciem / Księgi, podpisać się...” [wants, over the entrance / Of the book, to lay his signature...] and: “pisze...” [he writes...] – refer again to the researcher.

Much less attention has so far been given to another property complicating the understanding of Norwid’s utterances, related not so much to their (lack of) correspondence to patterns, but to their homonymity. It consists in the fact that some constructions can be ascribed more than one interpretation, and this is a property of the structure itself, not of the ambiguity of its elements, e.g. the lexemes used in it – as in the fragment from *Syberie* [*Two Siberias*], which, precisely because of the homonymy of its syntactic structure, can be understood in two ways: 1. that the grave awaits free people, or 2. that the grave is free:

⁹ See K. PISARKOWA, *Historia składni języka polskiego*, Wrocław 1984, pp. 42-43. For a more detailed discussion of such constructions in Norwid’s writings, see the article by A. KOZŁOWSKA, “Kilka uwag o archaicznych elementach składniowych w tekstach Cypriana Norwida,” pp. 105-106.

(5) – Wróćcie-ż kiedy? i którzy? i jacy?
 Z śmiertelnych prób:
 W drugą Syberię pieniędzy i pracy,
 Gdzie wolnym – grób! (*Syberie* [*Two Syberias*], VM 51)

(5) – Will you ever come back? and as who? and what?
 From fatal trials:
 To the second Siberia – of money and work,
 Where the grave awaits the free/ Where the grave is free!

Complications related to syntactic structure have already been signalled (albeit with variable intensity) by researchers of the poet's syntax. Characteristically, many, if not most of the studies devoted to this issue to date, have grown out of an attempt to understand, and sometimes justify, Norwid's syntactic shortcomings. The normative motif, in the – so to speak – accusatory variant, was introduced into Norwid's syntax already by Ignacy Fik, who levelled very serious accusations against Norwid as a constructor of utterances, seeing in them, *inter alia*, "a whole series of involuntary gaps,"¹⁰ inconsistencies in sentence construction, "negligence"¹¹ and an excessive use of ellipsis, which not only makes the text difficult but sometimes even impossible to understand. He concluded his reflections with the observation that in Norwid's texts "in many cases it is impossible to speak of any syntax at all."¹² It was the desire to explain the non-normativity of Norwid's sentence-forming practice that led later scholars to register the factors that influenced the shape of his syntactic constructions: These include historical-linguistic (the disruption of 19th-century syntax, variance and multiplicity of transformations), biographical-psychological (foreign language influences, emotionality of utterance, carelessness and negligence) and artistic factors – linked either to the conscious stylisation, rhetorisation and ennoblement of syntax¹³, or with the

¹⁰ I. FIK, *Uwagi nad językiem Cyprjana Norwida*, Kraków 1930, p. 34.

¹¹ See I. FIK, *Uwagi nad językiem Cyprjana Norwida*, p. 34.

¹² I. FIK, *Uwagi nad językiem Cyprjana Norwida*, p. 35.

¹³ For example, Konrad Górski noticed in the novella "*Ad leones!*" a resemblance to the Latin sentence formation and the associated rhetoric (see K. GÓRSKI, "'Ad leones!' (próba analizy)," in: *O Norwidzie pięć studiów*, eds. K. Górski et al., Toruń 1949, pp. 65-91). Teresa Skubalanka pointed to the hieratic nature of Norwid's syntax (see T. SKUBALANKA, *Styl poetycki Norwida ze stanowiska historycznego*, in: T. Skubalanka, *Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Norwid. Studia nad językiem i stylem*, Lublin 1997, pp. 144-196); she also showed how the poet used syntactic devices in constructing the narrative of the poem *Quidam* (see T. SKUBALANKA, „Uwagi o stylu poematu Norwida 'Quidam,'" in: T. Skubalanka, *Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Norwid*, pp. 197-212). Other factors were referred to in the cited studies by Jadwiga PUZYNYNA, Agnieszka SŁOBODA,

thesis of the necessary “p o - n a d - g r a m a t y c z n o ś c i arcydzieł” [hyper-grammaticality of masterpieces]¹⁴, or, finally, with the author’s concept of communication, according to which the poet activates the reader through the complications of the construction¹⁵, he “achieves the valuable effect of the semantic flickering of the utterance, ‘hinders’ access to the spoken truth and precisely by this allows it to be grasped in a deeper, less superficial way”¹⁶ by way of intellectual meditation.

A common feature of almost all previous attempts to explain the intricacies of Norwid’s utterances is that they confront the texts of the author of *Vade-mecum* with the syntactic norm, necessarily emphasising above all the deviations from this norm. As a result, the knowledge of the poet’s syntax is constructed, so to speak, in a distinctive paradigm. It mainly shows what, and possibly why, Norwid’s way of constructing sentences differs(/ed) from the practice of the epoch, rather than characterising its real, “positive” specific features, its perceptible, after all unique, yet still elusive and indescribable spirit of utterance. With some (but only some) exaggeration, one could say that so far our knowledge of Norwid’s syntax has been basically reduced to two threads: that it diverged from the customs of the 19th century, and that it was complicated, while – which is also significant – attempts to describe this complication have focused on indicating its causes or motivations rather than on describing its mechanisms.

Moreover – and even more importantly – all the efforts made so far to describe the peculiarities of Norwid’s syntax have referred, and continue to refer, to the rules of the Polish language, and therefore – in a somewhat simplified form – to structural patterns that constitute a certain abstraction, resultant or aver-

Anna CIOŁEK, and finally my own works on the syntax of the narrative poem *Quidam* (see A. KOZŁOWSKA, “Kilka uwag o składni ‘Quidama,’” in: “‘*Quidam*.’ *Studia o poemacie*, ed. P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2011, pp. 507-529) and on syntactic archaisms present in the texts of the author of *Vade-mecum* (see A. KOZŁOWSKA, *Kilka uwag o archaicznych elementach składniowych*).

¹⁴ The quoted phrase comes from a letter to Julian Fontana: “[...] powołaniem stanowczym arcydzieł jest byćnieustannie po-nad-gramatycznymi, i takimi przeto były, są i będą we wszystkich językach i we wszystkich całego świata literaturach. // Gdyby nie takimi były? – zakrzepłoby wszelkie obcowanie żywiołów ducha i sił – I byłaby mowa arcykrystaliczną zamarzłą sadzawką [...]” [(...) the firm vocation of masterpieces is to be *constantly hyper-grammatical*, and such, therefore, *they have been and will be in all languages and in all the world’s literatures*. // If they were not so? – all intermingling of the elements of spirit and forces would have coagulated – And the speech would be an arch-crystalline frozen pond (...)] (DW XII, 434).

¹⁵ For example, cf. Stefan Sawicki’s statement: “Norwid’s syntax is often something of a charade for the reader. Its solution becomes a condition of understanding” (S. SAWICKI, “Norwid: od strony prawników,” *Teksty Drugie*, 2001, Issue 6, p. 24).

¹⁶ W. KUDYBA, “*Aby mowę chrześcijańską odtworzyć na nowo....*” *Norwida mówienie o Bogu*, Lublin 2000, p. 87.

age characteristic of the usage at a given time. How would Norwid himself have commented on such a procedure? Perhaps as he wrote in *Milczenie* [*Silence*]: “Panowie gramatycy zaprzętać się zwykli jakąś abstrakcyjną mową, której nie ma” [Gentlemen grammarians used to be preoccupied with some abstract speech that does not exist] (PWSz VI, 232). The author of *Vade-mecum* is right about this. Knowledge of syntactic structures and patterns is useful – but only in describing the regularities of the Polish language, its system. Meanwhile while reading, we are after all dealing not with “abstrakcyjnie blade” [abstractly pale] (cf. PWSz VI, 232) syntactic schemes, but with sentences that are used, realised and actualised, i.e. with so-called utterances¹⁷. The difference between sentences and utterances is by no means theoretical or trivial – the construction of a concrete utterance is not limited to the simple application of a particular syntactic construction (in accordance with custom or in violation of it), but also includes the organisation of its other planes, present only in empirical uses. An utterance – but not an abstract sentence – is thus multifaceted, composed of several layers, and the syntactic structure, to which research has been limited so far, is only one of them. Taking all of them into account in the analysis of Norwid's utterances is important not only for methodological correctness (as in the case of all other utterances), but also – or perhaps even primarily – for practical reasons: firstly, it makes it possible to unravel many interpretative problems that cannot be resolved by observing only purely syntactic relations; secondly, it sheds some light on the specificity of Norwid's sentence-forming practice, since some of his characteristic “tricks” are based precisely on the use of mechanisms present only in an utterance.

The posited change in research orientation could be succinctly put in the following postulates:

1. The description of specificity rather than register and the explanation of the differences between Norwid's practice and the norm;
2. The organisation of an empirical utterance (which does not fit within traditionally understood syntax) instead of the syntax of an abstract system;
3. The characterisation of the different planes of an utterance instead of focusing only on syntactic structure.

In the next sections, I will show the role of the two most important phenomena in Norwid's organisation of utterances and in the interpretation of their structure, namely the metatext and the thematic-rhematic structure.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the distinction between sentences and utterances, see J. WAJSZCZUK, *O metatekście*, Warszawa 2005; M. ŻABOWSKA, “Makroskładnia – wypowiedzeniowe struktury syntaktyczne,” *Linguistica Copernicana*, 2017, Issue 14, pp. 71-87.

2. METATEXT

Some metatextual elements, i.e. authorial comments in *Vade-mecum*, have already been discussed: Ewa Wiśniewska analysed the titles and subtitles, mottoes, dedications, footnotes, prefaces, dates and other additions present in the collection¹⁸, while in one of my articles I describe parenthetical interjections¹⁹. Slightly different – and much more troublesome, still uncharacterised – are those elements of the metatext that have not been separated from the main text in any conventional way. Due to the lack of the usual typographical signals of distinctiveness (graphic signs, spaces, font changes etc.), one usually tries to interpret them as if they were regular components of syntactic relationships. Meanwhile, they are elements from another level of utterance and the attempt to incorporate them into the network of formal syntactic relationships cannot succeed. The predilection for the use of such undistinguished – or non-obviously distinguished – metatextual components, which break down the structures of an utterance and at the same time introduce into it a different (superior, authorial) perspective on phenomena, seems to me to be one of the important features of Norwid’s manner of speaking in general and his sentence-forming strategy in particular. Consider, for example, the ending of the poem *Zapał*:

(6) Lecz, z świętym-ogniem stało się jak z Niebios darem –
 Po Legendowych wiekach, przyszły historyczne,
 Ogień-boski, za-przestał być Dziejów skazówką
 (Natomiast, tanie mamy Zapałki-chemiczne
 Które, gdy zręcznie ujmiesz – obrócisz w dół, główką
 I o obuwie potrzasz?... płomyk, wraz wybucha;
 A Turki, palą fajkę z długiego cybucha...)
 (*Zapał* [Fervour], VM 80)

(6) But, the holy-fire followed the case of Heaven’s gift –
 After the Legendary Age, came the Historical Age,
 The divine-fire ceased to be the guideline of History
 (On the other hand, we have cheap chemicals Matches
 Which, when grasped aptly – with their head turned downwards

¹⁸ See E. WIŚNIEWSKA, “Autorski metatekst w ‘Vade-mecum,’” in: *Studia nad językiem Cypriana Norwida*, eds. J. Chojak, J. Puzynina, Warszawa 1990, pp. 153-170.

¹⁹ See A. KOZŁOWSKA, “Nawiasem mówiąc. O wtrąceniach nawiasowych w wierszach z ‘Vade-mecum’ Cypriana Norwida,” in: *Norwid. Z warsztatów norwidologów bielańskich*, eds. T. Korpysz, B. Kuczera-Chachulska, Warszawa 2011, pp. 35-66.

And rubbed against the shoes?... A flame, bursts forth;
Whereas the Turks smoke a long-stem pipe...)

The piece ends with a parenthesis, which itself is already metalinguistic, but its special status has been signalled – in accordance with convention – by the two-sided parenthesis. The interjected and bracketed text forms a compound utterance, whose last segment: “A Turki, pałą fajkę z długiego cybucha” [Whereas the Turks smoke a long-stem pipe] connects rather weakly with the preceding part. The author's punctuation (the use of a semicolon) does not determine the nature of the link (rather necessary within a single utterance) between this fragment and the rest of the compound utterance. How to interpret the ambiguous conjunction *a* [and/whereas] used by Norwid here? Is it an exponent of conjunction (which would be strange), or perhaps of contradiction? Or should we regard the last line as a commentary on the remark about the matches, devoid of transition signals, a kind of “metatext within a metatext”, which introduces information from the next level of transmission, complementing that given in the commented text? For me, the latter is most convincing – especially since the analysed verse stands in the same relation to the preceding three parenthetical verses as those three verses to the main text – a relation that can be explicated as follows: ‘I want to say something more.’

The metatext is also sometimes understood in another way – as a set of components of the text relating to the text itself, a kind of “seams” of the utterance²⁰. Such is the nature of, *inter alia*, the elements that bind the constituent clauses together and express modality. Norwid seems to have been aware of their special status. Among the punctuation habits characteristic of Norwid, but nowadays atypical, is the separation of the main part of a sentence from the metatextual elements introducing it – conjunctions, interrogative and relative pronouns and particles²¹:

(7) Lecz, szczęsny dwakroć, kto ma córki przytém (VM 25)
Ale, wydaża każdy, że aż parno (VM 33)
Zawsze, u Ciebie pora
[...]
Zawsze, Ty, u siebie, jak umysł zdrów:
Czy, w oliwnym kraju posuchy (VM 30)
Co, triumfem się raczą... (VM 33)

²⁰ This was proposed by Anna WIERZBICKA in her work „Metatekst w tekście”(in: *O spójności tekstu*, ed. M. R. Mayenowa, Wrocław 1971, pp. 105-121). On different understandings of metatext, see e.g. Dorota PIEKARCZYK, *Metafory metatextowe*, Lublin 2013, pp. 13-29.

²¹ For a discussion of the metatextuality of conjunctions, see J. WAJSZCZUK, *System znaczeń w obszarze spójników polskich. Wprowadzenie do opisu*, Warszawa 1997, p. 183f.

[...] gdy, głowy
Wnijdą na swe tułowy (VM 35)
Lecz; skoro, w roku zdradzili cię ludzie
Trzysta-sześćdziesiąty-raz?... (VM 42)
Gdyby!... dawano oba, w liczbie mnogiej (VM 25)
Lecz! – pod stopami drżą mi sarkofagi (VM 50)

(7) But, fortunate twofold, he who has daughters by his side (VM 25)
But, everyone manages it, so that it is even sultry (VM 33)
Always, you have time
[...]
Always, you, at your place, if the mind is sane:
Or, in the olive country of drought (VM 30)
Who, savour the triumph... (VM 33)
[...] when, heads
Will climb onto their trunks (VM 35)
But; since, in a year the people betrayed you
Three hundred-sixty-times?... (VM 42)
If!... both are given, in plural (VM 25)
But! – the sarcophagi are trembling under my feet (VM 50)

It is precisely these conjunction indicators and other metatextual elements blended into the fabric of the utterance that pose many problems for readers and interpreters, which can be at least partially clarified by taking into account the specificity of these elements and their place beyond the dependency relationships. Consider the following excerpt from the poem *Do Walentego Pomiana Z.* [*To Walenty Pomian Z.*]:

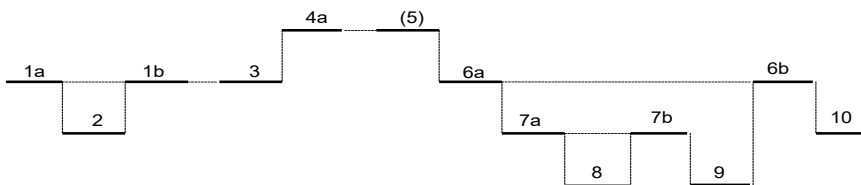
(8) – Jako więc w świata tego którejkolwiek stronie
Na mchu jeżeli w odludnym przylegniesz parowie
Planeta Ci się zaraz pod twe małe skronie
Zbiega, i czujesz globu kulę za wezłowie,
Tak, mówię Ci że skoro istota Poety
Zebrać u piersi swoich nie umie z planety
Całego chóru ludzkich współ-leż i współ-jęków
Od ziemi do macicy tej najwyższych sęków,
Od karła do olbrzyma, od tego co kona
Do tego, co zawisnąć ma jutro u łona:
Zaiste – niech, mię taki nie uczy co? jasne
A co ciemne? on ledwo że wie, co przyjemne!
(*Do Walentego Pomiana Z.* [*To Walenty Pomian Z.*], VM 139-140)

(8) – As therefore, if in whichever side of this world
 You will lie on the moss in a desolate ravine
 The planet will get soon under your
 Little temples, and you will feel the globe to be your headrest,
 Thus, I am telling you that since the essence of the Poet
 Cannot gather at his breast from the planet
 A whole chorus of human co-tears and co-groans
 From the ground to the womb of these highest knots,
 From dwarf to giant, from what is moribund
 To that which is to hang in the womb tomorrow:
 Indeed – he shall not teach me what? is clear
And what is obscure? he hardly knows what is pleasant!

Jadwiga Puzynina recognised here the construction of a contradictory adverbial clause organised around a correlated pair of adverbs: *jako... tak* (as e.g. in: *Jako Piotr jest leniwy, tak Paweł rwie się do pracy*[As much as Piotr is lazy, Paweł is eager to work]). Puzynina divided the first part of the utterance into the following constituent clauses:

– Jako więc^{1a} | w świata tego którejkolwiek stronie
 Na mchu jeżeli w odludnym przylegniesz parowie² |
 Planeta Ci się zaraz pod twe małe skronie
 Zbiega,^{1b} | i czujesz globu kulę za wezłowie,³ |
 Tak,^{4a} | mówię Ci⁵ | że^{6a} | skoro istota Poety
 Zebrać u piersi swoich nie umie z planety
 Całego chóru ludzkich współ-łez i współ-jęków
 Od ziemi do macicy tej najwyższych sęków,
 Od karła do olbrzyma, od tego ^{7a} | co kona⁸ |
 Do tego,^{7b} | co zawisnąć ma jutro u łona:⁹ |
 Zaiste – niech, mię taki nie uczy^{6b} | co? jasne¹⁰ [...]

and proposed the following diagrammatic depiction for it²²:



²² See J. PUZYNIŃA, “Z problemów składni w tekstach poetyckich Norwida (na materiale ‘Vade-mecum’),” p. 109.

The researcher considered the long and complicated utterance to be anacoluthic due to the fact that *tak* [thus] in line 5, foreshadowing the superordinate clause, according to her, hovers in a vacuum²³. The underlying assumption is that *tak* is on the same level of the utterance as the other constituents and that, as a result, it can be considered in syntactic relations. Meanwhile, *tak* – similarly to the correlated *jako* [as] – does not so much start the sentence (although it may appear so in a purely linear order) as it projects relations between the contents expressed in them. Therefore, a constituent sentence cannot comprise solely *tak*, because strictly speaking, *tak* does not belong there at all; it is located on another level of the utterance. It does happen that a sequence is interrupted just after the initial metatextual element has been uttered/written, and even before its proper constituents appear, but it seems that this is not necessarily the case in the cited passage.

The pair *jako – tak* is supposed to put the linked sentences in the relation of opposition, which in Polish usually takes two forms: indicating the two poles of the scale (e.g. *Jak kocham tę dziewczynę, tak nienawidzę jej matki* [As much as I love this girl, I hate her mother]), contrast or at least the difference between the phenomena or their incommensurability (e.g. *Jeśli w nowej komedii spotykamy głównie surowych, nieustępliwych ojców, to tutaj Demostenes jest ojcem niezwykle pobłażliwym* [If in the new comedy we meet mainly strict, implacable fathers, here Demosthenes is an extremely lenient father]²⁴). Therefore, the sentence: “Planeta Ci się zaraz pod two małe skronie / Zbiega” made subordinate by *jako*, should probably be linked to the distant imperative clause: “Zaiste – niech, mię taki nie uczy...,” to which it refers and which, in linear order, foreshadows *tak*. There is a contrast between the content expressed in these two sentences: the experience of the totality of the planet described in the subordinate sentence is juxtaposed with a questioning of the credibility of the poet who lacks the ability to express the desires and longings of the general public.

The interpretation proposed above is further supported by the fact that *tak* is followed by the phrase: “mówię ci” [I am telling you], which is separated from *tak* with a comma as if it were its part (as is the case in Examples 7)²⁵. However, it

²³ See J. PUZYŃNINA, „Z problemów składni w tekstach poetyckich Norwida (na materiale ‘Vade-mecum’),” p. 109.

²⁴ The last example is taken from the dissertation by Zenon KLEMENSIEWICZ, *Zarys składni polskiej*, Warszawa 1953, p. 54.

²⁵ I wrote about the practice of separating metatextual elements with a comma in the article: “Grafia Cypriana Norwida jako sygnał struktury tematyczno-rematycznej wypowiedzenia,” in: *Język pisarzy: środki artystycznego wyrazu*, eds. T. Korpyś, A. Kozłowska, Warszawa 2019, p. 117.

is also a metatextual expression (this time overtly metatextual), which also – precisely because of its place in the organisation of the utterance – cannot be treated as part of its structure and included in the diagram that is supposed to represent it, as Puzynina did²⁶. Furthermore, the expression entails a sequence of elements dependent on it and appropriately syntactically constructed:

mówię Ci że skoro istota Poety
 Zebrać u piersi swoich nie umie z planety
 Całego chóru ludzkich współ-łez i współ-jęków
 Od ziemi do macicy tej najwyższych sęków,
 Od karła do olbrzyma, od tego co kona
 Do tego, co zawisnąć ma jutro u łona

I am telling you that since the essence of the Poet
 Cannot gather at his breast from the planet
 A whole chorus of human co-tears and co-groans
 From the ground to the womb of these highest knots,
 From dwarf to giant, from what is moribund
 To that which is to hang in the womb tomorrow

They form an elaboration of the metatextual element and therefore a sequence from a completely different level to the other apparently related components of the utterance, a kind of structure within a structure that breaks off just before the over-arching constituent clause: “Zaiste – niech, mię taki nie uczy [...]”. Therefore, it turns out that – if we take into account the multifaceted nature of the utterance, or more precisely: the metatextual status of the indicated fragment – the constituent sentences entering into a relation of opposition will actually be in close proximity, separated in the linear order only by an extended interjection from another level of the text. Of course, the relation between the clauses: “Planeta Ci się zaraz pod twe małe skronie / Zbiega” and “Zaiste – niech, mię taki nie uczy...” is complicated by the anaphoric references in the second segment to elements that have already been introduced in the metatextual passage – the understanding who “taki” [he/one] from the penultimate line of the quotation (8) is, requires reference to the earlier conditional clause: “skoro istota Poety / Zebrać u piersi swoich nie umie z planety / Całego chóru ludzkich współ-łez i współ-jęków.” Norwid also does not make interpretation easy by changing the way he indicates the subject of the work – in the subordinate clause it is signalled with the pronoun *Ci* [*you*] (“Planeta

²⁶ The bracket in which the researcher placed its symbol (5) on the diagram can be interpreted as a signal of the peculiar status of this element.

Ci się zaraz [...] / Zbiega”), capitalized here, which suggests that it is a reference to the addressee²⁷, and in the superordinate clause – with the first-person pronoun (“niech, mię taki nie uczy”).

3. THEMATIC-RHEMATIC STRUCTURE

Every empirical, realised and actualised sentence (i.e. in an utterance), apart from the syntactic structure, involves also the so-called thematic-rhematic structure (functional/actual disjunction of the sentence), which expresses the universal structure of knowledge – someone knows what is being talked about (indicated by the thematic expression) that *p* (referred to in the rhematic part) rather than *not-p*²⁸. This type of disjunction is signalled in Polish primarily by sentence (contrastive) stress, intonation and pauses (especially the so-called thematic caesura). Since Norwid’s text is today primarily graphic in nature, and only secondarily, during recitation, can acquire a phonemic shape, we are only indirectly informed about the presence and form of the exponents of thematic and rhematic structure, which have a suprasegmental nature, by graphic elements which in Norwid’s case are signs of intonation that primarily signal what is said and referred to in a sentence. Of course, their interpretation is not straightforward; the task is not made any easier by Norwid himself, who often uses graphic signals of this structure inconsistently²⁹. It even seems that blurring the clarity of the division between the theme and the rheme can be considered a characteristic of Norwid, who sometimes seems to strive to say all at once, suggesting to his readers that both the main subject and

²⁷ Speaking in the second person about every person (including oneself) is present both in contemporary Polish (cf. *Rano nic ci się nie chce i ledwo wstajesz z łóżka* [You don’t have any energy in the morning and you can barely get out of bed]) and in Norwid’s idiolect (cf. a fragment of a letter: “Wszelako komukolwiek Polacy są wdzięczni, to zawsze najchwalebniejszym jest, bo nigdy nikomu nic nie wdzięczyli – nigdy – po śmierci zrobią składkę, żeby dzieci miały co jeść – a i to wyjątek! – gęsiego pióra ci nie dadzą” [Whoever Poles are grateful to, it is always the most praiseworthy thing, because they have never been grateful for anything to anyone – never – after death they will organise a collection so that the children will have something to eat – and even that is an exception! – they will not give **you** evenaquill pen], PWSz X, 130; emphasis mine – A.K.).

²⁸ See A. BOGUSŁAWSKI, *Problems of the Thematic-Rhematic Structure of Sentences*, Warszawa 1977, pp. 229ff.; A. BOGUSŁAWSKI, *A Study in the Linguistics – Philosophy Interface*, Warszawa 2007.

²⁹ I have pointed to this function of punctuation marks and graphic cues in general in Norwid’s texts in the already cited article *Grafia Cypriana Norwida jako sygnał struktury tematyczno-rematycznej wypowiedzenia*.

the rheme are equally important and distinguished. In the spoken text, of course, this has to be resolved, since one of the main exponents of the thematic-rhematic structure is the sentence stress. In view of this, how – remaining true to the poet's intentions – should the following passage from *Harmonia* [*Harmony*] be read:

(9) I nerwów gra, i współ-zachwycenie,
I tożsamość humoru;
Łączą ludzi bez sporu:
Lecz bez walki, nie łączy sumienie!
(*Harmonia* [*Harmony*], VM 18)

(9) Nerve-playing, and joint fascination,
And the identity of humour;
They bring people together without dispute:
But without a fight, conscience does not unite!

Did the author mean that it is conscience – and not something else – that does not unite without a fight, or that conscience does not unite without a fight and not in some other way? Both elements are underlined, which makes the graphic layout of this poem hardly trustworthy. A closer look at the semantics of the work apparently leads to the conclusion that the *p* mentioned in the definition is nevertheless conscience in the quoted statement, however, the graphic signals, as is often the case in Norwid's texts, are clearly intended to emphasise the thematic part as well.

The consideration of the thematic-rhematic structure would, however, unravel some of the problems of interpreting Norwid's sentences. For instance, in the first stanza of the poem *Wielkie słowa* [*Big Words*], there is a surprising reproach:

(10) Czy też o jedną rzecz zapytaliście
O jedną tylko, jakkolwiek nienowa!
To jest: gdzie papier przepada jak liście
Pozostawując same wielkie słowa...
(*Wielkie słowa* [*Big Words*], VM 99)

(10) Did you even ask one thing
Just one, however not new!
That is: where the paper is gone like leaves
Leaving only the big words...

The construction of the indirect question combined with the comparison produce a somewhat bizarre effect. As the syntax of this utterance seems to suggest, should the recipients of the utterance really be interested in where the discarded

paper goes? In other words – are we really asking *where*, or is it precisely the location that constitutes the rhematic part of the utterance, as, for instance, in the question: *Gdzie się podziewasz?* [Where have you gone?] Interpretative clues are provided by the manuscript's graphic layout, which reveals the knowledge structure outlined here. The abandonment of the practice, typical of Norwid, of placing the question mark just after the adverb beginning a subordinate clause³⁰ derives from the fact that the word *gdzie* [where] does not seem to play the role of a complement to the verb *przepadać* [be gone/lost]. On the other hand, the extent of the underlining suggests that the subject of the question is not the place where the paper has gone, but the whole situation described in the third verse of the stanza. The underlined phrase probably conceals an ellipsis, which can be completed as follows: “where [it happens so / such a situation takes place that] the paper is gone like leaves.”

CONCLUSION

Accepting the fact that the proper objects of description are not abstract syntactic structures but empirical utterances entails the necessity of examining their multilayeredness and levels of utterance other than syntactic, especially the thematic-rhematic structure and the metatext. Taking these elements into account – some, of course, certainly not all – seems to successfully resolve some interpretive dilemmas. What is more important, however, is that the proposed broadening of the viewing perspective makes it possible, I believe, to grasp the features that make up the specificity of Norwid's sentence-forming practice, which activates and exploits different levels of utterance. This mechanism co-creates the well-known effect of the difficulty or “coarseness” of Norwid's utterances, and, in a broader sense, also the formal aspect of “skrętu koniecznego w poezji polskiej” [the necessary turn in Polish poetry] he postulated (cf. PWSz IX, 377).

³⁰ Cf. the following examples, among others: “Lecz o górnych, tam! – kto? myślił lodach, / Modre przecierając szyby; / O czerwonych prędzej jagodach / Lub – gdzie? węzła się grzyby –” [But of the upper ones, there! – who? Has thought of ice-creams, / Wiping the blue glass; / Sooner of red berries / Or – where? The mushrooms knot –] (VM 31); “A w tym, coś grał – i co? zmówił ton – i co? powieć” [In this what you played – and what? Asked the tone – and what? will it say] (VM 126).

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PROBLEMY Z WYPOWIEDZENIAMI NORWIDA
(NIE TYLKO) Z *VADE-MECUM*.
UWAGI INTERPRETACYJNO-METODOLOGICZNE

Streszczenie

Artykuł wskazuje na główne problemy wiążące się z interpretacją wybranych wypowiedzeń z *Vade-mecum* oraz proponuje nową formułę opisu praktyki zdaniotwórczej Norwida.

Przyjęcie założenia, że właściwym przedmiotem analizy nie są abstrakcyjne struktury składniowe, ale empiryczne, użyte i zaktualizowane wypowiedzenia, pociąga za sobą konieczność uwzględnienia ich wielowarstwowości i poziomów innych niż składniowy, zwłaszcza struktury tematyczno-rematycznej i metatekstu. Jak pokazują zaprezentowane analizy, wzięcie pod uwagę tych elementów pozwala z powodzeniem rozstrzygać niektóre dylematy interpretacyjne. Proponowane poszerzenie perspektywy oglądu umożliwia również uchwycenie cech, które współtworzą specyfikę Norwidowej „składni”, uruchamiającej i wykorzystującej różne poziomy wypowiedzenia.

Słowa kluczowe: składnia; idiolekt Cypriana Norwida; wypowiedzenie; metatekst; struktura tematyczno-rematyczna.

PROBLEMS WITH NORWID'S UTTERANCES
(NOT ONLY) IN *VADE-MECUM*.
INTERPRETATIVE AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

Summary

This article indicates key problems related to the interpretation of selected utterances in *Vade-mecum*, and develops a new formula for describing Norwid's syntactic strategies. The assumption that the subject of analysis is not abstract syntactic structures but empirical, used and actualized utterances entails the necessity to acknowledge their multilayered character and the import of other levels than that of syntax, especially thematic-rhematic structure and metatext. As presented analyses show, taking these aspects into account helps to successfully settle certain interpretative dilemmas. The proposed expansion of perspective also allows one to grasp certain features that contribute to the specificity of Norwid's "syntax", which mobilizes and utilizes various levels of utterance.

Keywords: syntax; Norwid's idiolect; utterance; metatext; thematic-rhematic structure.

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