

Topicalization in Cyprian Norwid. A Reconnaissance

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Any empirical, realized and actualized sentence (i.e. an utterance) has both a syntactic structure, and a so-called thematic-rhematic structure (STR – Polish *struktura tematyczno-rematyczna*, a functional/actualized sentence segmentation), which expresses the universal structure of knowledge: someone who knows what is discussed (thematic part), knows that *p* (rhematic part), and not *non-p*¹. In Polish, such a segmentation is signaled mostly by sentence stress (contrastive), intonation and pauses (especially the so-called thematic hiatus).

In utterances with a neutral STR the rhematic part is highlighted in a clear way. In utterances with characterized (secondary) STR it is also possible to highlight the thematic part², which

¹ See A. Bogusławski, *Problems of the Thematic-Rhematic Structure of Sentences*, Warszawa 1977, p. 229 onwards; *A Study in the Linguistics – Philosophy Interface*, Warszawa 2007.

² For the notion of normal and highlighted topic and rhemat see R. Huszcza, *Tematyczno-rematyczna struktura zdania w języku polskim* [Thematic-rhematic sentence structure in Polish], "Polonica" VI, 1980, p. 57–81; *Tematyczno-rematyczna struktura zdania w językach różnych typów (Normalny podział tematyczno-rematyczny)* [Thematic-rhematic sentence structure in languages of different types (Normal thematic-rhematic division)], in: *Tekst w kontekście* [Text in context], edited by T. Dobrzyńska, Wrocław 1990, p. 58–59.

I shall henceforth refer to as *topicalization*³. In Polish, this is achieved mostly by syntactic means, such as diathesis and a change in word order in unmarked diathesis, lexically and prosodically⁴.

Jolanta Chojak was the first to observe that topicalization is among the key issues in Norwid's language in her discussion of the function of mid-sentence question marks in the poet's works⁵. However, she did not elaborate on that observation, nor did she provide examples to support it. The present paper does not attempt to offer a complete analysis of topicalization in Norwid's works either – it is rather an introductory attempt at recognizing the character and role of this means than a complete monograph devoted to it. There are two goals: 1. a presentation of topicalization exponents that are peculiar to Norwid, and at the same time, not particularly obvious to modern readers; 2. an attempt at answering the question of its place in Norwid's practice of constructing utterances.

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In works by Norwid, similarly to the Polish language in general, syntactic elements are mostly responsible for topicalization. In sentences with unmarked diathesis, inversion is the basic syntactic topicalization exponent, which Norwid liked used often. For example, in the poem *Cenzor-krytyk* [Censor-critic] the topic of the first sentence is moved to the beginning:

*Authors, are judged by their works,
And not, authors [do not judge – PZ] authors!* (VM 54)⁶

³ In the literature topicalization is also understood more narrowly, as giving the status of topic to another part of a sentence than the subject. Zuzanna Topolińska uses this term as synonymous with thematic-rhematic structure and actual sentence segmentation (see Z. Topolińska *Informacja zgramatyzowana (kryteria selekcji)* [Grammaticalized information (selection criteria), "Biuletyn PTJ" 2012, no. LXVIII, p. 72).

⁴ See J. Chojak, Z. Zaron, *Wyznaczniki tematu wypowiedzi* [Exponents of the topic of an utterance", "Polonica" 2005, vol. XXIV–XXV, p. 24; S. Karolak, *Aktualne rozczłonkowanie zdania* [Actual sentence segmentation], in: *Encyklopedia językoznawstwa ogólnego* [An encyclopedia of general linguistics], edited by K. Polański, Wrocław 1995, p. 33.

⁵ See J. Chojak, *Echa nie zadanych pytań czy wyróżnione tematy (o pewnych użyciach Norwidowskiego pytańnika)* [Echos of questions unasked or highlighted topics (on certain functions of Norwid's question marks)], in: *Studia nad językiem Cypriana Norwida* [Studies in the language of Cyprian Norwid], edited by J. Chojak, J. Puzynina, Warszawa 1990, p. 33.

⁶ *Autorów, sądzą ich dzieła, // Nie, autorzy autorów!*

Most texts by Norwid quoted here are based on: C. Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*. [Collected Works] edited by J.W. Gomulicki, vol. 1–11, Warszawa 1971–1976 (henceforth as PWsz). Whenever that was impossible, I used a new edition of the book by the KUL team under Stefan Sawicki: vol. 3. *Poematy* [Epic poems] part I, edited by S. Sawicki, A. Cedro, Lublin 2009; volume. 4. *Poematy* part II, edited by S. Sawicki, P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2011; vol. 5. *Dramaty* [Plays] vol. I, edited by J. Maślanka, Lublin 2015; vol. 6. *Dramaty cz. II*, edited by J. Maślanka, Lublin 2013; vol. 7. *Proza* [Prose] part I, edited by R. Skręt, Lublin 2007; vol. 10. *Listy* [Letters] part I, 1839–1854, edited by J. Rudnicka, Lublin 2008; vol. 11. *Listy* part II, edited by J. Rudnicka, Lublin 2016; vol. 12. *Listy* part III, edited by J. Rudnicka, completed by E. Lijewska, Lublin 2019 (henceforth as DWsz) and versions prepared for the critical edition: C. Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, edited by J. Fert, Lublin 2004. In quotations and references the first number following the abbreviation of the title refers to the volume, and the second one – to page number. My decision to rely on different editions results in different punctuation conventions, especially when it comes to Norwid's highlights, which are realized through underlining in the manuscripts, in PWsz – spacing-out, and in the KUL edition – italics. I introduced corrections to some of the analyzed examples, necessary from the perspective of a linguistic analysis, restoring their original punctuation and underlining following the manuscripts shared via the Polona digital library (www.polona.pl, see also C. Norwid, "Vade-mecum". *Transliteracja autografu* [Manuscript transliteration], edition and foreword by M. Grabowski, Łódź 2018) and Biblioteka Cyfrowa Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie [Digital Library of the National Museum in Kraków] (<http://cyfrowe.mnk.pl>).

However, this pattern is not repeated in the second verse – here a new component (*authors*) is situated at the beginning, not separated from the topic exponent (*authors*) by a pause. The pause (signaled by a hyphen in the edited version, and in the manuscript – by a comma) is placed in another place – before the rhematic expression, i.e. in such a way as to highlight the *novum* with intonation. As a result, the topics of both sentences create a framing device of this distich, appearing in its beginning and ending.

Diathesis plays a key role in STR. Although Norwid did not abuse the passive voice, he was skillful at using it in order to signal the hierarchy of arguments, for example in the final couplet below:

For today nothing is given
 Not in life, not in art, not in history,
 That what is done is first complete in mind,
 Which means it is lame, for it is still in the head.
 And none will dare, will he make it?
 (Like a man who is to build a tower,
 But can the tower be built?...) – (PWsz 1, 232)⁷

The use of the passive voice, which makes the object the subject of a sentence, introduces a subtle contrast between two perspectives: the ambitions of the future builder (expressed in the active voice) and the real demands related to the planned work (signaled by the sentence with marked diathesis, in the passive voice).

Situations in which Norwid used anacoluthons deserve special attention from any scholar of STR. Perhaps we should explain some incorrect constructions with adverbial participles, especially when the participle is used in the passive voice (like the first example below), with the need to highlight the topic (or, more broadly – the primacy of the thematic-rhematic structure over the semantic one):

Indeed – but hurry, for, a flower
 Not being done on time,
 I have to transform the course of hair and robes,
 My evening – almost *wasted!* (*Malarz z konieczności* [A painter out of necessity], PWsz 1, 317)⁸

or when an incorrect form of the participle occurs – for instance a present participle instead of a past participle:

A thread, having embraced with a spark, at first burns
 It floods the wax which overflows (VM 248)⁹

⁷ Dziś właśnie przeto nic nie jest dostałe // W życiu i w sztuce, i w dziejów osnowie, // Że, co się robi, w myśli pierw jest całe, // Czyli ułomne, bo dopiero w głowie. // I nikt nie waży się, czy on dokona? // (Przykładem męża, co ma stawić wieżę, // Lecz zali wieża może być stawiona?...)

⁸ Owszem – lecz śpiesz się, oto bowiem, kwiat // Nie będąc na czas zrobiony, // Odmieniać muszę włosów tok i szat, // Wieczór mój! – prawie stracony!

⁹ Nić, objąwszy iskrą, zrazu płonie, // Zalewa wosk, który górą wstawa.
 This line comes from a variant edition of the poem *Ciemność* [Darkness]. It seems that the past participle form “objęta” would be correct.

The issue of participles in Norwid's text has been discussed in several works, and his inclination towards using them incorrectly has been explained in various ways¹⁰ – yet none of those works refers to STR. Meanwhile, at least whenever Norwid's problems with participles overlap with diathesis, an explanation and (partially) an excuse for his lapses could be found in his attempts at topicalization; in the examples presented above, thanks to violating the rules of grammar the expression indicating the topic plays the role of the subject in at least one syntactic clause (in the second cited poem – also the superordinate clause). It is hard to claim that Norwid consciously and purposefully aimed at such an effect; he was rather so engrossed by thinking about the selected topic that the issue of grammatical organization of the whole utterance and correctness had to be of secondary importance.

Perhaps striving for topicalization also supported the presence of non-agentive constructions with verbs with the reflexive *się* [self] which played the role of a predicate, in agreement with the nominative:

views somewhat similar to those which you may come across in Rome encounter themselves (DWsz 7, 46)¹¹

Truth, one *arrives together at it and waits!* (VM 57)¹²

In Norwid's times such expressions, in which the object of an activity takes the place of the subject, were already relics of Old and Middle Polish. In the 17th and 18th centuries they were gradually becoming subjectless categories, with the impersonal verbal form with the accusative case as the exponent, replacing the previously used reflexive form with the nominative case (*ziemia się uprawia* [the land cultivates itself] → *ziemię się uprawia* [the land is cultivated])¹³ Due to the fact that those transformations reorganized the system of arguments, it is possible that Norwid's inclination towards such archaic forms resulted from (among other things) his wish to preserve a diathesis in which the object of an activity (in the examples below – “views” and “truth”) remains the subject of the respective utterances.

Putting additional information in brackets next to the topic is an interesting topicalization textual device which is typical of Norwid. This extra information is “a digression of a kind, revealing the existence of the sender of the main text (commentary to the main text)” and hence are “a metatext added above the ‘leading’ text”¹⁴.

¹⁰See for example J. Puzyńska, *Z problemów składni w tekstach poetyckich Norwida (na materiale „Vade-mecum”)* [On syntax-related issues in Norwid's poetic texts (based on “Vade-mecum”)] in *Słowo Norwida* [Norwid's word], Wrocław 1990, pp. 100–101; A. Słoboda, *Imiesłowowy u Norwida* [Participles in Norwid], “Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Językoznawcza” 2001, No 8(28), p. 145; A. Kozłowska, *Kilka uwag o archaicznym elementach składniowych w tekstach Cypriana Norwida* [Some remarks on archaic syntactic elements in Cyprian Norwid's texts], “Studia Norwidiana” 2011, No 29, pp. 101–104; A. Ciołek, *Imiesłowowe równoważniki zdań w listach C.K. Norwida* [Participle verbless sentences in C.K. Norwid's letters], “Poradnik Językowy” 2015, No 7, p. 23–31.

¹¹napotykają się widoki cokolwiek zbliżone do tych, które w Rzymie napotykasz

¹²Prawda, się *razem dochodzi i czeka!*

¹³See K. Pisarkowa, *Historia składni języka polskiego* [History of the Polish syntax], Wrocław 1984, p. 42–43.

¹⁴M. Grochowski, *Składnia wyrażen polipredykatywnych* [Syntax of polipredicative expressions], in: *Gramatyka współczesnego języka polskiego. Składnia* [Modern Polish grammar. Syntax], edited by Z. Topolińska, Warszawa 1984, p. 249; also by the same author *Metatekstowa interpretacja parentezy* [Metatextual interpretation of parenthesis], in: *Tekst i zdanie. Zbiór studiów* [Text and sentence. A collection of studies], edited by T. Dobrzyńska, E. Janus, Wrocław 1983, p. 247–258.

And she (I say: Poetry), bringing
 Her arm pale, gave me a sign,
 To dim the light, because it lies smiles [...]
 She died (Poetry) this great
 Mediator of the two irreconciled spheres,
 An ocean of lust and a drop of dew,
 This monarch, and this slave (PWsz 2, 200)¹⁵

Zygmunt* (the dead man) once told me, joking,
 [...] Claiming that – in spite of the belated keeping –
 Who themselves still in history [the following part missing from the manuscript] (VM 90)¹⁶

The aim of such parentheses is to ensure perfect identification of an object rather than to characterize it – pointing to the current topic of an utterance, selected from a collection of foreshadowed topics (“she” or “Zygmunt”), whose extent may still seem too broad.

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In Norwid’s texts we can also find examples (though not very numerous) of using units which played the role of topicalizing expressions both in 19th-century Polish language and today. Here are some examples:

à propos:

À propos princes: do you remember, Madam, how our memorable duchess entered the parlor, but not the one of Gedymin like the Golitzins, the Moscow duchess, who having reached out to me said these beautiful words to me: “You scoundrel! You rascal! Why have you made yourself an emigrant?” (PWsz 10, 162)¹⁷;

as to:

As to the word “ugly”, it sounds like being life-less, use-less; whereas the adjective “monstrous”, it means: a punishment, monster-like, i.e. a monster (PWsz VI, 351)¹⁸;

¹⁵Ona zaś (mówię: Poezja), swe ramię // Blade ku oknu niosąc, znak mi dała, // Bym światło przyćmił, bo uśmiechy kłamie [...] // Umarła ona (Poezja), ta wielka // Niepojedanych dwóch sfer pośrednica, // Ocean chuci i rosy kropelka, // Ta monarchini i ta wyrobnica

¹⁶Zygmunt* (nieboszczyk) raz mówił mi żartem, // [...] Twierdząc, że – mimo opóźnionej pieczy – // Kto dziś się jeszcze w dzieje

¹⁷À propos książąt: czy Pani pamięta wniście do Salonu naszej pamiętnej księżnej, ale nie od Gedymina jak Golitzinowie pochodzącej, lecz moskiewskiej księżnej, która wyciągnawszy do mnie rękę rzekła te piękne słowa: „Gałganie! Łajdaku! czemu ty się zrobiłeś emigrantem?”

¹⁸Co do wyrazu „brzydki”, ten wybrzmiewa: bez-życia, bez-użytku będący; określnik zaś „szkaradny” znaczy: zakażony, czyli potworny, czyli potwór

when it comes to:

Finally, when it comes to the division of Polish history into developing, flourishing and collapsing – it is far below any criticism (PWsz 7, 66)¹⁹;

regarding:

Regarding the salvation of Humanity not by the nation (as I shall again repeat for the sake of clarity), according to me work is inopportune, and according to what yesterday's events showed, a lot will be wasted – nothing will deliver (PWsz 7, 33)²⁰;

in terms of:

in terms of the sacrament of marriage, it was only because of the support and will of Emperor Aleksander that DIVORCES have not been widely legalized (PWsz 8, 259)²¹;

as regards:

as regards speaking about the 1863 uprising – it is impossible not to discuss the whole Europe (Pwsz 7, 96)²².

Apart from conventional forms, which are commonly used for topicalization, in Norwid's texts there are also less obvious topicalizing expressions, which may prove to be difficult to interpret, such as the nominal *jako* [as]. Let us consider two longer excerpts from Norwid's letters to August Cieszkowski from the fall of 1850²³:

FACTS.

As health and stamina – deafness.

As a member of the Motherland – all rejected manuscripts.

As memories – judgment that I am not an ideal enough friend.

As the Church – active – militant – what will happen with this way of hiding faith in Christ.

As a family – brothers in exile, out of whom the older one is abandoned by his relative and *betrayed* in the most disgraceful way.

As a marriage – I have been loved and *engaged*, but, as Juliusz says: “*phew! I have received a letter informing me about his marriage*” – and then, as he lost her fortune and left her – he sends me a note reminding me of his love.

¹⁹Co się tyczy nareszcie podziału historii polskiej na wznastającą, kwitnącą i upadającą – ten jest o niesłychanie wiele niżej od wszelkiej krytyki

²⁰Jeśli tedy idzie o zbawienie Ludzkości nie przez naród (jak to dla jasności znów powtórzę), wedle mnie praca jest niewczesna, a wedle tego, co wczorajsze okazały wypadki, zmarnuje się wiele – nic nie zbawi

²¹w kwestii sakramentu małżeństwa, jedynie za poparciem i wolą Aleksandra Cesarza wszechstronne uprawnienie ROZWODÓW nie nastąpiło

²²w odniesieniu do powstania 1863 r. mówiąc – niepodobna jest o całej nie mówić Europie

²³According to the DWsz edition both letters were written before 13 November 1850.

As a society – that Polish society is the most wretched, just as the Polish nation is the greatest – and hence this greatness of malfunctions, because we always use it to cover up the wretchedness; the sublime is remade as a wretched bathrobe – and thus there is nothing. –

As relations and connections – that soon I will *alienate them all, I will lose them all* – because, only in the case of *sudden* and *ultimate* needs, calling for their help, I cannot happen in a natural, normal way – in a conventionally correct fashion. Just as, for instance, it is impossible for someone run over by a vehicle not to be covered in mud and blood, not to have their collars reddened, when they are carried into the nearest house (DWsz 10, 275)

I came organically (as *health* and *stamina*) to a state when the *day* means taking away impressions from the outside which are the most repulsive. *Night* – turning my eyes inwards.

As a *position* – you know what?

As a *memory* – for some time increasingly flatter and more wicked, for you know how the *hurting* men excuse themselves – with *the madness of the one who is hurt*.

As a member of the Motherland – that *it does not understand me*, it does not deny its language, that it morally rejects me – that none wants or can understand that it runs towards its downfall... that none in it wants or is able to understand that *light shines in the dark, and darkness has not overcome it* – that I want books rather than truths, death rather than life – that I want the news and clear parables – although none has learned them from books – indeed, everything starts from understanding in the darkness, *for light shines in the dark*.

[...]

As the *Church* – where I have been planning to go for a few years and have been working on it internally – well: if I became a monk today – *I would commit a heresy tomorrow* – not being able to enter the Church of contemplation, for this is where I persist and am, but as a *factor* and a worker. And the Church, which influences England not due to the Irish suffering, and Russia not due to the Polish suffering – does not oblige me in its action. And *as long as it is in this action*, it shall soon die, for apostleship is not diplomacy nor jiggery-pokery, nor cabbalism, but a genuine prophecy.

As a *family* – two moral ghosts of two brothers: one is the victim of his own nobleness – the other of the dis-nobleness of strangers.

As a *society* – that I have tried and HAD A GENERAL THOUGHT IN THIS, trying – not with a book and letter, and deductions of Christianity, but with my whole persona: with my conscience, heart, stomach, nerves, suit – and so it possible to socialize *misfortunes-eccentricity* by centering prosperity – and I can see, it is impossible (DWsz 10, 271–272).

According modern semantic conventions the repeated use of *as* should be understood as an element which introduces information about some aspect of the life or activity of the author of the letter. *Słownik języka polskiego* [Polish dictionary] edited by Witold Doroszewski defines such uses of the word *jak* [as] in the following way: “it connects nouns (rarely – adjectives of participles in the function of nouns) with a superlative word, highlighting the function, particular character, activity, position, role served for something else, etc.”²⁴ *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* [Great Polish dictionary] offers an even more detailed explanation, listing three meanings of *jako*: 1. ‘it points out to such a feature of an object which allows to under-

²⁴*Słownik języka polskiego*, edited by W. Doroszewski, online version: <http://doroszewski.pwn.pl/haslo/jako/> [date of access: 19. 08. 2021].

stand what is being referred to' (i.e. a function exponent, e.g. *seen as the first*); 2. 'the sender points to a quality of an object which allows one to understand what is being referred to' (a so-called explanation exponent, e.g. *as a Pole I am interested in the future*); 3. 'what is being referred to happens at a time when a given person was the person that is being referred to' (so-called location in time exponent, e.g. *as a child she felt lonely*)²⁵. Only one of the quoted combinations can be interpreted according to this definition: "*As a member of the Fatherland*". The definition seems adequate in the remaining uses, because the nouns or nominal groups used in this catalogue do not name the functions, attributes, stages, aspects of life or actions of Norwid, but rather – the spiritual, intellectual, and social phenomena which comprise this life, and may constitute the object of considerations of the sender in terms of which he defines himself in some way. The paraphrase 'as to... when it comes to...' should be then ascribed to the anaphoric *as*.

The same function is played by some uses of the word *jak* [like]:

Similar to a hag
 Humanity, which is crying and mocking today;
 – Like history?... it only knows: "*blood!*..."
 Like society?... – only "*money!*..." (VM 26)²⁶

This quotation from *Larva* may be read in different ways. For example, sentences which open with *like* can refer to time ('when history [takes place/happens]', 'when society [comes into existence/forms itself]) or a comparison ('like history [does it]', 'like society [does it]'). However, neither of the two proposals is fully convincing; moreover, both assume the existence of an ellipsis of some sort. Noticing the exponent of sense in 'as to... when it comes to...' in *like* allows to understand the discussed excerpt without any additional assumptions, and shows that it is about humanity's attitude towards the two phenomena discussed here, or, more broadly – about the values towards which humanity strives when confronted with history and society.

IV

Punctuation is also used as a topicalization device in Norwid's texts (especially punctuation marks and underlining), which constitutes a peculiar equivalent of suprasegmental STR exponents in a text²⁷. According to Jolanta Chojak, sentence-internal question marks signal topicalization:

²⁵See *Wielki słownik języka polskiego*, edited by P. Źmigrodzki, https://wsjp.pl/index.php?id_hasla=30252&id_znaczenia=5166912&l=12&ind=0 [date of access: 20. 08. 2021].

²⁶Takiej to podobna jędry // Ludzkość, co płacze dziś i drwi; // – Jak historia?... wie tylko: „*krwi!*...” // Jak społeczność?... – tylko: „*pieniędzy!*...”

²⁷On the use of graphic elements in Norwid's texts see A. Kozłowska, *Grafia Cypriana Norwida jako sygnał struktury tematyczno-rematycznej wypowiedzenia* [Graphic elements of Cyprian Norwid as a signal of the thematic-rhematic structure], in: *Język pisarzy: środki artystycznego wyrazu* [The language of writers: means of artistic expression], edited by T. Korpysz, A. Kozłowska, Warszawa 2019, p. 101–125.

I? name this activity – yes?... vanity! (VM 20)
 They think that nine maidens bring inkwells
 For him [a poet – A.K.], each with braids like a comet;
 And eyes? Azure blue, or a southern night –
 Robes? like a cloud, whisper? like morning mist (VM 134)²⁸

Chojak shows that the question mark does not introduce the standard question function to the text – it highlights the topic, it is “an exponent of anticadence and a contrastive accent. It constitutes a peculiar type of sentences with clearly stated, distinguished topic; a ‘hidden’ contrast, opposing the current topic with any other conceivable topics, being its essence”²⁹. For example, the question marks which appear in the sequence of negative poetic definitions from *Królestwo* [Kingdom]:

– Truth? it is not a mixture of contradictions...
 [...]
 An eagle? it is not half-turtle, half-thunder
 The sun? it is not half-day, half-night,
 Calmness? it is not half-coffin, half-home
 Tears? they are not rain, although they make wet like rain (VM 55)³⁰

They signal the following meaning: ‘I am talking about truth/ an eagle/ the sun/ calmness/ tears, and not about any other things you could possibly think of’.

In some cases question marks are supported by underlining, as seen above, which also often expresses the actual segmentation of utterances in Norwid’s texts. For example in *Wielkie-słowa* [Big-words] topicalization, and hence the selection of specific characters (‘I am talking about Cicero/ Paweł/ Socrates, and not any other person you could think of’) must have seemed important enough to Norwid to use two exponents of topicalization simultaneously:

Have you asked why Cicero?
Paweł? or Socrat? having said a few words
 They are alive... even today they are able to move you,
 And even if you do not like them, you believe them (VM 99)³¹.

²⁸Ja? nazywam się czynność – prawda?... marność! (VM 20) // Im zdaje się że dziewięć panien kałamarze // Noszą mu [mowa o poecie – A.K.], a warkocze każdej jak kometa; // A wzrok? jak nieba lazur, lub noc południowa – // Szaty? jak obłok, poszept? jak mgła porankowa

²⁹J. Chojak, pp. 31–32.

³⁰– Prawda? nie jest przeciwieństw-miksturą... // [...] Orzeł? nie jest pół-żółwiem, pół-gromem // Słońce? nie jest pół-dniem a pół-nocą, // Spokój? nie jest pół-trumną, pół-domem // Łzy? nie deszcz są, choć jak deszcz wilgocą

³¹Czy, zapytaliście czemu Cicero? // Paweł? lub Sokrat? tych słów, rzekłszy parę // Żyją... do dzisiaj cię za piersi biera, // A ty choćbyś im nierad, dawasz wiarę

Some of Norwid's underlining also function as independent topicalization indicators³². For example:

Narcissus, pleasantly self-absorbed:
 "Consider this!" he yelled "everyone:
 What? over Greece (well, over myself)"
 – Echo will answer him simply (VM 29)³³;

The Lapońscy, put the screws on the priest³⁴ (VM 96);

A parable, is a picture, a song is the spirit of the picture³⁵ (DWSz 4, 237).

In some cases Norwid underlines only one element of a topical expression, thus stressing its complexity and hierarchism. For example, this is how the form "the first" (underlined in red) in the introduction to *Rzeczy o wolności słowa*³⁶ [On the freedom of speech] can be interpreted:

The first, form of a word seems to be an internal song and a monologue whose traces can be found in today's Indian eremitism (DWSz 4, 213)³⁷.

Double commas surrounding a selected element of an utterance are also used for topicalization. One such example can be found, among others, in the opening lines of *Vade-mecum*:

Having their hands swollen with clapping
 Bored with the song, the people called for action (VM 12)³⁸.

Marta Rogowska, who wrote an important paper on punctuation in Norwid, notes that the word "people" is highlighted here with intonation, because – due to the commas – there are pauses in front of and behind it; she argues that the aim is to attract the reader's attention to

³²Barbara Subko, who has written on underlining in Norwid's texts, explains that the poet used underlining to highlight topical sentences, i.e. sentences introducing new topics in a paragraph or longer passages of text (B. Subko, *O podkreśleniach Norwidowskich – czyli o podtekstach metatekstu* [On underlining in Norwid's works – metatextual subtexts], "Studia Norwidiana" 1991–1992, vol. 9–10, p. 55), but the examples quoted here show that Subko may have meant topics in terms of contents rather than in terms of actual sentence segmentation.

³³Narcyz, w siebie wpatrzon przyjemnie: // "Zwał!" wyzywał "wszelki człowiecze: // Cóż? nad Grecję (bo cóż, nade mnie)". // – Echo jemu prosto odrzecz

³⁴Lapońscy, wzięli księdza w swe obroty

³⁵Parabola, jest obraz, pieśń jest duch obrazu

³⁶Perhaps we should analyze the formal differentiation of underlining in Norwid from this perspective, which however is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, as Subko observed, this underlining can be in different colors, and sometimes multiple lines are used. Moreover, Norwid introduced them at different stages of writing – sometimes after rereading his texts (see B. Subko, p. 45).

³⁷Pierwszą, słowa formą zdaje się być wewnętrzna pieśń i monolog którego ślady do dziś w pustelni indyjskim spotykają się

³⁸Klaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawice // Znudzony pieśnią, lud, wołał o czy

this part of the utterance, and to point out to the agent, rather than the action of calling³⁹. To be a bit more precise, Norwid used commas – and thus pauses – and the change in intonation (anticadence) forced by them in order to distinguish the main segment of the topical part⁴⁰, signaling the intention of speaking about the people rather than something else. Rogowska’s observation concerning the contrast emerging here is thus accurate, although it is not between the agent and the action, but between the current topic and other potential topics of the utterance.

A similar situation happens in the second verse of *Rzeczy o wolności słowa* quoted below:

And it is her own image – it starves her too:

Yes, Humanity, without Divinity betrays itself (DWSz 4, 218)⁴¹.

The word “Humanity” is not only written between two commas, but also additionally highlighted by being underlined and spelled with a capital letter. Both these signals rather clearly show that the expression “without Divinity”, which (without any additional clues) could be syntactically interpreted in two ways (“Humanity without Divinity” – “without Divinity it betrays itself”) is a part of the rhematic part: Humanity (T) without Divinity betrays itself (R). ‘When it comes to Humanity, without Divinity it betrays itself’ – this is how the sense of the discussed verse can be paraphrased.

To conclude this part it should be stressed once more that Norwid frequently decided to use two punctuation exponents of topicalization. The most common combinations are:

- a question mark and underlining:
An ox? with gold-pleated horns, like a church calf,
A stomach? there is an audience, a coservatist? a fork (VM 137)⁴²
- commas and underlining:
 (even in ancient masterpieces, power, is the main sound:) (DWSz 4, 214)⁴³.

∨

Topicalization devices show that in Norwid’s practice of constructing utterances the hidden contrast plays a fundamental role. It is this contrast that makes the basis for topicalization

³⁹M. Rogowska, *O intonacyjno-retorycznej roli Norwidowskiej interpunkcji* [On the intonation-rhetorical role of punctuation in Norwid], “Studia Norwidiana” 2012, vol. 30, p. 26–27.

⁴⁰The comma between “people” and “called for” can also be interpreted as a signal of a topical pause.

⁴¹In the manuscript the whole verse is additionally underlined with an orange crayon.

I to własny jej obraz – i ten ją zagładza: // Tak, Ludzkość, bez Boskości sama siebie zdradza

⁴²This example also shows Norwid’s inconsistency in using punctuation – the first topic-element (“stomach”) was highlighted with a question mark (hence it illustrates the combination in question), whereas the second one (“conservatist”) – only with a question mark.

Woł? z rogi złoconemi, jest bursowy cielec, // Żołądek? jest publiczność, doktryner? widelec

⁴³(: nawet w arcydziełach starożytnych, moc, głównym jest wdziękiem:)

which the poet used for two main functions: 1. indicating that an utterance is about X rather than any other conceivable topic, and 2. (less often) to clarify that X is the topic rather than any other object which could be selected from a previously signaled class.

Observing topicalization (and other STR-related phenomena) one can also notice that Norwid's communication with his readers takes place on several levels at the same time: the poet foreshadows by referring to a given object, he imposes a defined structure of knowledge on his utterance, i.e. distinguishes its theme and rhemat, and also provides the reader with strong signals highlighting this structure. In the case of topicalization, those signals can be ascribed the following intention: 'I am talking about X, and not about Y, Z... etc.'

The discussed operation represents Norwid's characteristic way of speaking, which could be summarized as a strategy of surplus. It seems that Norwid always wants to say more than standard language mechanisms would allow him to; he strives to show as many options as possible, and present the discussed problem from various perspectives. Among others, this included the goal of topicalization, which normally takes a back seat, whereas in Norwid's texts it is often highlighted with punctuation. This results in a blurring of the clear division into the thematic and rhematic part, a peculiar ambiguity in defining them suggesting that the main topic and the rhemat are equally important.

As can be seen, taking into consideration the question of topicalization, and more broadly, STR mechanisms in Norwid's texts, throws a new light on the specificity of his idiolect and text-forming techniques. Some of the characteristic features (such as inversion, selected parentheses, syntactic anacoluthons, punctuation marks, underlining) are based on using STR-level mechanisms. It also allows us to solve many problems with understanding his texts, which are impossible to solve on the level of purely syntactic relations, and creates a chance for a potential translation of the conclusions into an adequate vocal interpretation. Last but not least, it is also significant due to its methodological precision, because, after all, in reading – not just Norwid's texts – we deal not with “abstractly pale” (see PWsz 6, 232) syntactic patterns, but with sentences which have been used, realized, and actualized: with utterances⁴⁴. The distinction into what one says, and what is said is an inalienable, distinguishing component of them.

translated by Paulina Zagórska

⁴⁴On the difference between a sentence and an utterance see J. Wajszczuk, *O metatekście* [On metatext], Warszawa 2005; M. Żabowska, *Makroskładnia – wypowiedzeniowe struktury syntaktyczne* [Macro-syntax – syntactic utterance structures], “Linguistica Copernicana” 2017, No 14, p. 71–87.

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KEYWORDS

TOPIC

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IDIOLECT

ABSTRACT:

Topicalization, understood as highlighting the topic of an utterance, has different syntactic, lexical, and punctuational exponents. Punctuational exponents are specific to Norwid, constituting a peculiar equivalent of suprasegmental exponents of the thematic-thematic structure in a written text. The discussed operation introduces a hidden contrast, indicating that the topic of an utterance is X rather than any other conceivable topic, or an object which could be selected from a previously signaled class. This is accompanied by the following intention: 'I am talking about X, not about Y, Z... etc.', This blurs the clear distinction into the thematic and rhematic part, and hence represents Norwid's characteristic strategy of speaking, in which the main topic and rhemat seem equally important.

THEMATIC-RHEMATIC STRUCTURE

topicalization

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