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Coherence of Literary Texts Is a Convention

1

Today none of the Polish theorists of literature would speak of the coherence of a text if Maria Renata Mayenowa had not formulated the problem years ago. The best known work in this area is several conferences she organized, the volumes resulting from them (*O spójności tekstu – On Textual Coherence*, *Tekst i język – Text and Language*, *Semantyka tekstu i języka – Semantics of Text and Language*), and the two editions of *Poetyka teoretyczna* (*Theoretical Poetics*).[1]

I would not hesitate to say that Maria Renata Mayenowa has assigned textual coherence an exceptionally important place not only in her own research work but also among the problems that, in her opinion, poetics must confront. Her numerous comments on this subject permit us to speak of her own individual, personal conception of textual coherence. Again, hers is the only relatively systematic discussion of this problem in Poland. Thus, this conception will be the starting point for my considerations.

She formulates the problems connected with textual coherence for use in the theory of literature, however, from many varied fields of contemporary linguistics, frequently quite distant from

[1] *O spójności tekstu*, ed. by M. R. Mayenowa, Wrocław 1971 (further OSP); *Tekst i język. Problemy semantyczne*, ed. by M. R. Mayenowa, Wrocław 1974 (further TiJ); *Semantyka tekstu i języka*, ed. by M. R. Mayenowa, Wrocław 1976 (further STiJ); M. R. Mayenowa, *Poetyka teoretyczna. Zagadnienia języka*, 1st ed. Wrocław 1974, 2nd ed. Wrocław 1976 (further PT).

poetics. Before proceeding I must note that her work on textual coherence cannot be understood if we do not take the inspirations for it into account. Her conception owes them much, and I believe they have determined its goals and analytical methods. Without this reservation any consideration of her work would be futile.

This article consists of three parts. The first discusses the variations discernable in articles on textual coherence. The majority of these articles constitute the starting point for Mayenowa's detailed conclusions. The second part attempts to reconstruct the general theses peculiar to her conception of textual coherence and presents my polemic with it. The third includes my slightly different conception of textual coherence. Her observation that many points of textual coherence are still debatable has encouraged me, and this debatableness forms the justification for this article.

Textual coherence is one of the newest problems in contemporary linguistics, more precisely of the discipline known as textual linguistics or text grammar. Clearly, textual coherence is logically later that the problem of the text itself, the formulation of which is considered not without reason the greatest revolution in linguistics since Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916). The question of the text is an attempt by linguists to cross the magic boundary that the sentence formed until recently. In other words, the goal of textual linguistics is to search for syntactical elements larger than the sentence. Textual linguistics aims to show that a text is not just a sum of sentences but a clearly structured whole that is derived from smaller parts. Text grammar (as opposed to sentence grammar) has introduced two new elements into linguistics: first, the suprasentence formal structure of the whole and, second, the mechanism through which the wholes bud from the smaller language units. There are three important contexts of this problem, although each derives from a different methodology.

The first is the tradition of the Czech school of linguistics connected chiefly with Vilem Mathesius, who began work on the functional word order (*aktuální členěni vety*). Scholars working with him (Fibras, F. Daneš, and others) viewed the sentence as a language message and believed that research on syntax cannot limit itself to the sentence level but should include the entire discourse and

the extra-linguistic factors connected with it. Jan Mukařovsky has used these theses very well for the needs of poetics.

The second context consists of sociolinguistic research the representatives of which (William Labov, Dell Hymes, or John J. Gumperz) claim that the object of empirical linguistic descriptions should be the use of language, complete discourses in actual communication situations.

The third context and certainly the most important is Noam Chomsky's theory of generative grammar and the polemics and modifications connected with it. The most important of the latter for text grammar are the works of J. R. Firth and Michael A. K. Halliday. If Chomsky's concept, mainly the differentiation of surface and deep structure, provided the impulse to research the possibility of sentence transformations, Halliday drew attention to the continuity among categories and language phenomena. His major contribution to the theory of texts was the analysis of the connections between successive sentences in a discourse (their coherence) and the differentiation of sub- and suprasentence phenomena. Halliday showed that a text is not a set of randomly ordered sentences, but a *developing* continuity of elements with precise syntactic connections.

For the researcher of the stylistics of literary texts, Halliday's approach opens new theoretical perspectives. Traditional stylistics ("taxonomic" as Chomsky says) described texts as static, homogeneous wholes. In this tradition textual coherence (its unity or structure) is described as a result of the interaction of many independent and hierarchically ordered subsystems of the given text or as a system of opposing relations or various metalanguages (verse, strophe, genre, etc.). Halliday's conception, on the other hand, emphasizes the process character of the multi-sentence discourse; the fluid, the mutual interpenetration of the individual elements and especially the sentences.

In short, text grammar is the sharpest polemic with sentence grammar so far. Methodologically, it is both a continuation of the theses of transformational grammar (it accepts Chomsky's basic axioms) and a radical departure from the goals Chomsky assigns to linguistics. Instead of studying ideal language competence, it postulates research on the entire macrostructure of a discourse.

Obviously, the fundamental condition for developing a complete text grammar is producing a set of coherence rules for its elements. These elements are not sentences but syntagmas, and they distinguish the interest of text grammar (discourse) from that of linguistics (sentences). If Chomsky regarded the task of linguistics as analyzing language competence, text grammarians believe that the task is to analyze text competence, knowledge of resources and mechanisms for building discourses. Coherence is the phenomenon that makes a text (discourse) not just a set, a corpus of collected sentences, but a fluid interpenetration of one sentence with another, an expansion of the sentence elements into a formal and semantic whole of a higher order. Coherence, however, is not the only problem of this grammar, peculiar because it does not belong to the traditional problems of sentence linguistics. The linguistic embodiment of such a general theory of discourse would be a theory that led to the formulation of language rules of the grammar of a text. Teun A. van Dijk, one of the main representatives of text grammar, has set himself this ambitious goal.

This type of linguistic research provides the student of the poetics of literary texts with much emotion, excitement, and fascination. At the very outset, the grammar of text as a multi-sentence construction is closer to empirical literary studies and its theoretical problems than to traditional linguistics. It is possible to hope that Roman Jakobson's old formula (*Linguistics and Poetics*, 1960) will take on a completely new, reenvigorated meaning.

Before summarizing the views on coherence, I must note that for a literature theorist text-grammar theory has similar and dissimilar initial axioms. One similar axiom is the thesis of syntactic and semantic connection of the successive sentences in a discourse and the precise substantiation of these connections. A dissimilar one is the thesis of the necessity of formally describing the structure of such a discourse and excluding peculiarities of literary texts and literary communication from the general rules of text grammar. There is no doubt that for text grammarians literary texts pose problems similar to those that for Noam Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar a poetic sentence does.

The best proof of the methodological differences concerning textual coherence is that nearly all the authors of the articles

printed in the volumes edited by Mayenowa define the terms *coherence* and *text* in completely different manners. Moreover, they have completely different research goals. The basic differences can be reduced to eight items.

First, coherence applies even at the level of the sentence, for a sentence can be regarded as a special text. Both Olgierd Wojtasiewicz and M. R. Mayenowa conceive coherence in this way, and Mayenowa refers to Vilem Mathesius' famous thematic-rematic analysis. However, the Czech's works requires close scrutiny. He deals less with connective relations between sentences (the major point both of linguistic analysis of text and of Mayenowa), and more with different types of word order within a sentence depending on the sentence context and communicative situation, especially the initial point. Certainly, the context and communicative situation drew Mathesius' attention to extra-sentence factors; nevertheless, "the functional dismemberment of the sentence" applies only to the sentence (as a closed structure) and not to the text as a continuity of sentences. Thus, he does not employ the term *coherence* in his study either in analyzing the internal sentence syntax or in analyzing the influence of situational factors on so-called objective or subjective word order in a sentence.[2]

It is not surprising then that some linguists (Z. Saloni among others) state that coherence does not apply to the sentence since every sentence is by definition coherent.[3] Coherence can occur only in a text of a series of sentences. Studies of coherence, Saloni continues, should concern themselves with sections longer than one sentence because the connection between the words in a sentence meet conditions different from those that connective relations between sentences meet. Here the first contradiction appears.

[2] O. Wojtasiewicz, "O pewnej interpretacji pojęcia spójności tekstu" (On Some Interpretation of Textual Coherence), [in:] OSP; M. R. Mayenowa. "Struktura tekstu" (Text Structure), [in:] PT, pp. 251–257. Mathesius' article appeared in Mayenowa's translation "O tak zwanym aktualnym rozczłonkowaniu zdania." [in:] OSP. Mathesius' categories for analyzing multi-sentence narrative structures has been successfully applied by M. Červenka, "Aktualne rozczłonkowanie zdania w prozie artystycznej" (Functional Sentence Perspective in Artistic Prose), transl. by A. Grochowska, [in:] STiJ.

[3] Z. Saloni, "Definicja spójności tekstu" (Definition of Textual Coherence), [in:] OSP, pp. 89–94.

If, on the one hand, a text is a "long sentence," then the relations between elements within the sentence can be a model of the relations within an entire text. If, on the other hand, the text (as a series of sentences) is a structure other than a sentence, then the mechanisms observed by linguistics within a sentence cannot be a model of the relations between the elements of the text.

Second, analysis of coherence can be done only on sentences used correctly; thus, there is no sense in studying such syntactic-semantic anomalies as poetic sentences. This is a basic condition, for semantic theory can describe only those sentences that are grammatically correct.[4] Most researchers believe, however, that coherence should also include poetic texts, even if these texts present linguists with greater methodological difficulties than pleasure as a reader. J. P. Thorne has shown, in his analysis of the sentence "he danced his did" from e.e. cummings's poem "any lived in a pretty how town," that textual coherence and grammaticalness are completely different, not mutually exclusive things.[5]

Third, some linguists believe that textual coherence consists of the precise connections of the succeeding sentence with the preceding one in the series. They, then, speak of linear coherence. There exists, however, a less rigorous position that states that the condition for coherence does not have to rely on the immediate succession of sentences, for larger frameworks of compositional arrangement suffice, for example the paragraph (Nina Leonteva, Elena Paducheva, OSP).

The polarization of these positions has far-reaching consequences.

Fourth, some linguists think that coherence is purely a question of syntax because it concerns only the *formal* connective relations between sentences. They speak of syntax coherence.[6] Nearly general

[4] I. Bellert, "On a Condition of the Coherence of Texts," *Semiotica* 2 (1970); Saloni, *op. cit.*

[5] J. P. Thorne, "Stylistic and Generative Grammars," *Journal of Linguistics*, 1965, is a polemic with S. R. Levine, "Poetry and Grammaticalness," [in:] *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Linguists*, ed. by H. G. Lunt, The Hague 1964.

[6] Cf. K. Polański, "Spójność tekstu" (Textual Coherence), [in:] *Encyklopedia wiedzy o języku polskim*, ed. by S. Urbańczyk, Wrocław 1978 (the term *spójność*

agreement exists that grammatical and lexical categories fulfil the welding role in the text. Among the grammatical categories, within complex sentences, structural connections of dependence and conjunction are enumerated. In multi-sentence constructions, pronouns and articles functioning anaphoristically are mentioned.[7] Among the lexical categories, primarily repetitions of given units creating suprasentence lexical orders or the use of synonyms creating a semantically joined lexical series fill the welding role. Generally speaking, index expressions, definite and indefinite descriptions, and deictic expressions fill the welding function in a text (connectors). The welding function of logical connections (causal, result, opposition, *consecutio temporum*, articles) and metalinguistic relations to earlier sentences (questions, answers, comparisons) are also mentioned.[8]

But syntactic interpretation of coherence also has its opponents. They believe that textual coherence is purely a question of semantics and not syntax. The supporters of the semantic theory claim that syntactic dependences between sentences appear only over limited sections of a discourse, between sentences directly connected with one another. But a text contains many other connections than those between immediately adjacent sentences. Jerzy Kuryłowicz has proposed the most extreme version of semantic coherence, for he negates the existence of syntactic coherence in a text. Because it gets to the heart of the matter, it is worth-while quoting it in its entirety.

'coherence' did not appear in the *Słownik terminologii językoznawczej – Dictionary of Linguistic Terminology* – ed. by Z. Głąb, A. Heinz, K. Polański, Warszawa 1968); M. A. K. Halliday, "The Linguistic Study of Literary Texts," [in:] *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Linguists*. Cf. also M. A. K. Halliday, "Linguistic Function in Literary Style: An Inquiry into the Language of William Golding's the Inheritors," [in:] *Literary Style: A Symposium*, ed. by S. Chatman, London–New York 1971.

[7] Anaphore is regarded by R. Hasan (*Grammatical Cohesion in Spoken and Written English*, London 1968) as the main factor in coherence; quoted after R. Fowler, "Cohesive, Progressive and Localizing Aspects of Text Structure," [in:] *Literature as Social Discourse. The Practise of Linguistic Criticism*, Bloomington 1981, pp. 67–71.

[8] Cf., among others, F. Daneš, "Semantyczna i tematyczna struktura zdania i tekstu" (Semantic and Thematic Structure of Sentence and Text), [in:] TiJ; M. Červenka, "O tematycznym następstwie" (On Thematic Succession), *ibidem*.

A sentence is syntactically articulated because its components are joined by syntactical connections such as definition [...] or flexional agreement. [...] There are, however, no syntactic regulations that can guarantee the coherence of texts of more than one sentence. Speaking of coherence (cohesion) in some story, we are thinking on *semantic* connections between its individual parts. Every sentence is interpreted on the basis of the text preceding it and on the basis of the individual knowledge of the listener, knowledge that the author assumes and expects. If after introducing Napoleon, the author writes the *Emperor*, he assumes the reader has a basic knowledge of history. The previous text contributes to its being comprehended not only due to the communicative content of its sentences but also because of the conclusions drawn from them by the reader. If on the basis of the previous text, his conclusions, and knowledge the reader can always detect the semantic coherence between the sentence and what preceded it, then the text is coherent. Semantic coherence constitutes the fundamental characteristic of a text, distinguishing it from a loose collection of sentences (discourse). Semantic coherence has clearly particular importance for scholars interested in the contents of texts (historians, literary historians). Linguistics, however, seeks *formal hierarchies*, formal principles that regulate the semantic contents: subordinations (rection, syntax of orders; congruence, syntax of agreement), regulating the word order.[9]

Fifth, some linguists say that only the written language and language meaning, an author's text, can be the object of coherence analysis.[10] The opposing thesis is, however, more common. It states that the coherence of a verbal text is determined by the *communicative* situation and extra-lingual knowledge of the reader. *This contradiction is the greatest one in this theory*. The implications of the first thesis is that textual coherence can be analyzed only with linguistic tools. The implications of the opposite thesis is, however, that textual coherence resulting from the mechanisms of communication (for example, the categories of truth or humor) escapes the competence of linguistic description. A linguist, therefore, can analyze only some of the interconnections in a text.[11] In

[9] J. Kuryłowicz, "Współczesne językoznawstwo" (Contemporary Linguistics", transl. by M. Abrahamowicz, *Znak*, 1971, No. 5.

[10] Saloni, *op. cit.*

[11] Linguists who support this position ask: "can a text be generated without access to extra-linguistic material—which is considered to be necessary in order to explain the notion of coherence?" T. A. van Dijk, "Some Problems of Generative Poetics," *Poetics*, 1971, No. 2. Semantic interpretation, they say, cannot be done within the framework of linguistics proper.

other words, some claim that the object of study in coherence is exclusively linguistic, intersentence relations in a text. Others claim, however, that there exists an *extra-linguistic coherence of sentences*. The latter applies to such things as agreement of the meanings of a text with the relations in other texts.[12] Focusing what has been said: most linguists believe that the source of textual coherence derives from the connective relations between the sentences; however, researchers who take theoretical-linguistic problems into account, have pointed out that suprasentence textual structures exist that create chains of relationships guaranteeing textual coherence as a language form.[13] While some analyze a text as a structurally interconnected, growing series of statements, others prefer to claim that a text has its own, supralinear, global meaning that cannot be reduced either to the semantics or the interconnections of the sentences. Thus, for the researcher of the first position coherence proceeds from the sentence to the text, and for the second, from the text to the sentence, from the whole to its parts.

These divisions have one more implication. In answer to the question, "What is a text?" some linguists say that it is only a series of sentences; others (such as Petr Sgall), that it is a series of discourses, such uses of sentences, to which a modal framework can be applied.[14] The first position closes analysis of coherence within the language system; the second, within the realm of the acts of communications.

Sixth, some linguists (Anna Wierzbicka, Irena Bellert, Maria Renata Mayenowa) claim that textual coherence excludes metalingual and metatext discourses, for a coherent text is a homogeneous one. "The definition of a coherent text," Irena Bellert writes, "concerns an idealized text with no digressions, a text that expresses one uniform line of reasoning, a continuous plot, etc."[15] But someone else points out that precisely the metatextual framework

[12] Bellert, *op. cit.*; Wojtasiewicz, *op. cit.*

[13] Červenka, "O tematycznym następstwie"; W. O. Hendricks, an unpublished work cited after van Dijk, *op. cit.*

[14] P. Sgall, "O pojęciu tekstu" (On the Conception of Text), transl. by A. Grochowska, [in:] STiJ.

[15] Bellert, *op. cit.*

of the discourse are the coherence elements in a text and metatexts fill the role of important connectors in a text.[16]

Finally, the last two contradictions.

Seventh, coherence, Apresyan says, is not only or not just a problem of textual coherence, but a metalingual problem of its description. Thus, coherence is not so much a category of the text described, as the majority of linguists claim, but a metalanguage category, an artificial language, for example a semantic version of a given text.[17]

Eighth, some linguists claim that coherence is directly connected with comprehensibility;[18] others, however, believe a text can be incomprehensible to a reader and still be coherent.[19]

If on the basis of the reconstructed premises one attempted to describe the axiomatic theory of textual coherence, one could draw only one conclusion; the theory of textual coherence is an incoherent theory, an internally inconsistent theory.

Such a thesis is obviously striking, but false, because the collection of all the positions on the subject does not form a theory of the phenomenon. Undoubtedly, there are varying concepts of coherence, because there are different theories of texts. In particular, there are different linguistic methodology that derive from different traditions and that define the research object (language, system, discourse, act, sentence, text) in varying ways and subordinate it to different scholarly goals.

Several different scholarly goals can be distinguished among the linguists statements on coherence.

The first goal of research on textual coherence is an analysis of types and resources for connections between successive sentences

[16] K. Pisarkowa, "O spójności tekstu mówionego" (On the Coherence of the Spoken Text), [in:] TiJ, p. 71; H. Isenberg, *Überlegungen zur Texttheorie*, Berlin 1968; van Dijk, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

[17] Yu. D. Apresyan, *Semantyka leksykalna. Synonimiczne środki języka* (*Lexical Semantics. Synonimic Language Means*), transl. by Z. Kozłowska, A. Markowski, Wrocław 1980, pp. 24–55.

[18] Mayenowa, OSP, PT. "The detection of unambiguous coherence mechanisms or the determination that they are not present is the first essential step in describing a text, is the first and essential step toward the elementary understanding of the text, "—TiJ, p. 309.

[19] Saloni, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

in a discourse. A description of those language categories that within the structure of a sentence fill distinct suprasentence functions is the goal.

The second goal of research on textual coherence is connected with the concepts of discourse grammar inspired by Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar of the sentence. The goal of this grammar is to create a general theory of discourse (a theory of structures that extend beyond the sentence) based on the rules for generating sentences. The disagreement concerns the rules of effectiveness of such a grammar. On the one hand, even the modified version of Chomsky's grammar of sentences is still inadequate for describing poetry sentences.[20] On the other hand, a grammar that could generate all different kinds of texts (including literary ones) still remains a postulate and a hope of a few researchers. Perhaps that postulate is the most important echo of Chomsky's faith in the existence of language (here text) universals.

The third goal of research on textual coherence is to make so-called mechanical processings of a text. From this point of view Soviet linguists are working with textual coherence. They ask in what manner are derivatives made from the initial text (summaries, machine translations, extractions of information). Such research has also been used in the theory of foreign language instruction.

The fourth goal of research on textual coherence is a construction of an artificial metalanguage that should describe the discourses formulated in a natural language. According to Soviet linguists every text has some global meaning that is verbalized in a natural language retaining the semantic equivalences of and the relevant order, word selection and order, etc. The semantic version should ensure transmission of the meaning formulated in the natural language retaining the semantic equivalences of and the relevant information to the natural language.

In the third and fourth cases, textual coherence is treated as an end goal. It is achieved by summarizing the initial text. Typically, the coherent text produced by these operations, however, has had the semantic ambiguities characteristic of natural languages eliminated.

[20] These transformations are reviewed by van Dijk, *op. cit.*

Finally, the fifth goal of research on textual coherence is to understand the text. A description of the coherence mechanisms, M. R. Mayenowa emphasizes, brings the reader closer to a correct interpretation of a given text.[21]

The most important differences between these conceptions depend on the formulation of one premise and the answers to three questions.

The premise is: the objects of research on coherence are sentences, statements, or discourses (as one wishes), but not speech acts in the sense proposed by J. L. Austin.[22] Because if we adopted Austin's perspective, it would be necessary to include extra-language elements of the communicative situation in the syntactic and semantic description of the text. Because for Austin, the syntax and the meaning of the text are not exclusively language phenomenon but are elements of action in a particular social situation. Austin's proposal opens new, fascinating perspectives for describing heterogeneous elements of the social communicative situation, but it cannot be made to agree with research on intratext communication (intralanguage). Austin has not only created a new terminology (speech acts and its aspects; locution, illocution, perlocution), but a new object (field) for research that can most simply be named a theory of language action.

Excluding extra-language elements of communication and remaining within the realm of intratext communication, the three questions are:

1. Are the categories of a text the sentence and other language elements, or does the text have its own suprasentence, textual categories?

2. Does analysis of coherence apply only to exclusively language elements of the text, or does it include the reader's extratextual knowledge? What is the function of presupposition in a text?

3. Are metatextual elements in a text foreign matter, another text, or structural elements proper to the given text?

Different answers to these questions define the boundaries between the different methodologies of contemporary linguistics and determine

[21] Mayenowa, TiJ.

[22] Cf. *How to Do Things with Words*, London 1962.

the different conception of the text and the ability to describe its elements.

These differences have fundamental significance for research on the poetics of literary texts, for they expose the scale of distance from the object and goals with which poetics deals. M. R. Mayenowa has made an attempt to apply a linguistic comprehension of coherence to research on the poetics of the literary text. I will now proceed to discuss her conception.

2

Nearly all the articles mentioned so far are from the field of linguistics. The theses on textual coherence that appear in them concern either coherence in language or in any text, not necessarily literary works. Mayenowa's articles have a different character. Her conception of textual coherence concerns undoubtedly *literary texts*, and poetics is the discipline in which *textual coherence* appears as a term. Mayenowa has formulated her views on coherence in literary texts and texts in general in three articles: "Spójność tekstu" (Textual Coherence and the Reader's Attitude, OSP), "Teoria tekstu a tradycyjne zagadnienia poetyki" (Text Theory and Traditional Problems of Poetics, TiJ), and "Inwentarz pytań do teorii tekstu" (An Inventory of Questions on Text Theory, STiJ). She summarized them in the chapter "Structure of a Text" in the textbook PT.

Clearly, I cannot discuss all of Mayenowa's detailed, penetrating analyses or their evolution over more than a decade. Thus, I will present only the most key theses as well as the most debatable ones of her entire conception.

First, M. R. Mayenowa has adopted a narrow linguistic definition of a text. For her, texts are nothing but multisentence structures. As a result, analyses of coherence mechanisms are chiefly syntactic and are concerned exclusively with connections between adjacent sentences. Thus, coherence mechanisms connecting sentences in the text interest her. I will not enumerate these mechanisms; as regards intersentence connections there is no debate. She notes, however, that the analysis of these connections serves to illuminate the semantic mechanisms in a literary text.

Second, Mayenowa's conception of textual coherence is premised on its communicative character (particularly evident in her emphasis of the role of presupposition). The communicative character of this conception is defined by three axioms that for M. R. Mayenowa are a definition of a coherent text. A coherent text has one *producer*, one *receiver*, and one *subject*. These unities have a functional character. This means simply one type of knowledge, that she explicates as the ability to assign to one person all the modal frameworks appearing in all the sentences of the text. The unity of subject, however, should be understood probably to denote a text that is always a statement about fragment of reality (OSP, PT).

Third, a coherent text is homogeneous. As a result *dialogues* and discourses with *metatexts* are incoherent.

Fourth, her conception of a coherent text is normative. M. R. Mayenowa emphasizes that the conditions for coherence are objective, and the coherence of a text depends on whether they are fulfilled. She also points out the existence of text norms, saying there are, for example, types of sentences that are appropriate only at the beginning or only at the end of a text (TiJ, p. 301; PT, pp. 267–287). Here the essential differences between the text grammarians' and Mayenowa's conception is apparent. Inasmuch as the former aim mainly to describe the elements and types of coherence in a discourse, Mayenowa places great emphasis on the boundary between coherent and incoherent texts, on the techniques for making an incoherent text coherent, which is typical of Y. Apresyan's approach.

To end this very brief characterization I present one more of Mayenowa's theses; "literary texts built as a kind of whole with a marked beginning and end are seldom coherent texts on the level of primary meaning" (PT, p. 313). This thesis is also presented in this form: texts with a dominant cognitive function are constructed for maximal coherence; the poetic function, on the contrary, serves as the primary destroyer of textual coherence (OSP; TiJ, pp. 308–309).

If it is agreed that these are the actual general premises of Mayenowa's conception of textual coherence, then my reservations are the following.

First, if literary texts are the objects of description by poetics, then the notion of text must adequately account for their peculiarities. For linguistics the notion of text seems to have only two meanings: as opposed to the notion of system or to that of sentence. As mentioned previously, in the second case the text is only a multi-sentence series, whose linear order has an additive character. Analysis of the syntactics of such texts done by linguists are reduced to examining from two to five successive sentences in the series or at most a dozen or so sentences in a paragraph. Taking the goal of linguistic description into account and learning Austin's speech acts as elements of action aside, this approach to analysis is understandable. However, attempts to transfer such descriptions to literary texts are a *misunderstanding*. Even if we assume that a literary text is composed only of sentences, it is obvious that there is a great difference between the structure of a few sentences from James Joyce's *Ulysses* and the sentence structure of the whole. The status of these text sentences between which there are no syntactic connections (sentences that constitute a character, plot, or description) in the concept of textual coherence seems to be exactly the same as that of ungrammatical sentences (poetic ones) in transformational grammar. The relations between such sentences against the background of syntactic coherence are thus "imperfect," "deviant," "anomalous" phenomenon, or, if one prefers, "textual agrammaticisms." The first conclusion is that the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic mechanisms observed in sections of a few sentences of *discourses* qualitatively differ from the mechanisms over an entire *literary text*. One cannot say that an analysis of the coherence in a paragraph of a few sentences is a model for the analysis of coherence in an entire text. It is only an analysis of a few sentences, and if one speaks of them as a text, then the term has little in common with the term "text" used in literary studies (for example, the language level of a literary work). Without entering into the details, there do exist categories of literary texts that are language creations, but that cannot be described by observing only the linear interconnections of the sentences. Among them are such categories as plot, character, narration, time, space, symbolism, etc. These are the categories that Janusz Sławiński calls the great

semantic figures of a literary text.[23] Their role looms large in building textual coherence (*text* and not successive *sentences*). What is troubling in Mayenowa's conception, is that they are absent in the description of coherence in literary texts and there is no indication of what the relationships between the coherence of the primary sentence level of a text and the other suprasentence levels of a text are.

Second, Mayenowa's three axioms of textual coherence (a "discourse by one producer for one receiver about one object," PT, p. 252) arouses serious doubts.

One producer is, first of all, one organizing consciousness that "presents the given text as a closed arrangement" (PT, p. 253). In other words, it is the author as the highest instance "to whom we assign the organization of the text" (PT, p. 254). In a formal, semiotic, or daily sense, this thesis is obvious, unquestioned. It, however, sharply contradicts M. R. Mayenowa's other explications. In the language of semantics this thesis means according to her that "the I within the modal framework of every sentence must point to the same person" (PT, p. 253). This means that the modality of the text (the relationship of the text producer) is the same as the modality of the individual sentences. If so, then I cannot enumerate a single such *literary text*. It is necessary to distinguish the modality of the entire text (the level implied by the producer's text) from the modality of the individual sentences (level of discourse: heroes, narrator, characters in a drama) and to include the modality of the convention of the discourses (quotation, allusion, grotesque, pastiche, parody, etc.). Harmonizing these modalities into an identity in a literary text is simply impossible. This is the source of the singularity of the literary (the poetic) work. All the problems of interpretation of a literary work begin with modality, in other words, with its global meaning, its force, its ideological message, or the author's intention. The variations in interpretation are in part a result of varying understanding of the modalities of the individual elements and levels of the text. This thesis of M. R. Mayenowa sharply contradicts the basic

[23] J. Sławiński, „Semantyka wypowiedzi narracyjnej" (Semantics of Narrative Pronouncement). [in:] *Dzieło, język, tradycja*. Warszawa 1974.

thesis of poetics, the axiom of the *multiple ambiguity* of literary texts. The premise of ambiguity in a literary text denotes that the "I" in a modal framework or frameworks is not one person or consciousness (in a functional sense) but a garland of varying modalities. Thus, the semantic explication of the principle of one producer arouses my doubts.

The practical sense of this thesis all arouses my doubts; for the literary historian every text is a sign of an "ordering consciousness", if the function of this consciousness is supposed to be the "presenting of a text as a closed arrangement."

Moreover, I suspect that in Mayenowa's thought we are confronted with homonymy in the case of the word "text." Once it means "a closed arrangement" separated by "one producer," another time the mechanism for developing sentences, as is evident in the clear explication of dialogues as incoherent texts. I shall return to this later.

I have identical reservations regarding both the semantic explication of one receiver ("all the possible you's of the modal framework should refer to the same person or group of persons," PT, p. 254) and the principle of unity of subject. The word "subject" has a narrow, linguistic meaning in Mayenowa's work. The subject in a coherent text is the same as the indivisible meaning of successive sentences of the text for her (their logical product). But in literary texts there are few such sentences. It suffices to think of the principle of juxtaposition, the poetics of grotesque language, dadaistic word composition, the futurist idea of "free words," or the surrealist convention of *écriture automatique*. Thus, the above can be reduced to one question: whenever M. R. Mayenowa speaks of a literary text, she means a series of successive sentences interconnected by syntactic and semantic dependences. Only a text conceived in this manner could fulfil the conditions given. But a conception of text constructed in this manner is a structure of minimal usefulness for the literary researcher.

Anticipating my further counterarguments I will state that M. R. Mayenowa describes literary communication (sender (producer) – receiver!) with terminology taken from linguistics, the ideal of which is a formalized notation (textual coherence).

I cannot agree with Anna Wierzbicka and Irena Bellert's thesis

of the acoherent status of a metatext within a text that M. R. Mayenowa accepts. Characteristically, they realize that their position is self-contradictory. Thus, Wierzbicka states that a metatext, although it is a "foreign body,"[24] clearly performs a welding function. A homogeneous understanding of a text, eliminating any metatext, has only one explanation. The goal of A. Wierzbicka and I. Bellert's coherence analyses is to create a semantic version of a text understood as a series of successive, interconnected sentences. There is not enough space here for a detailed polemic with Mayenowa's theoretical-literary generalization of this conception, I will state only one thesis: metatexts are more characteristic textual categories than, for example, are those parts of sentences that function at the suprasentence level (anaphora, deixis, indexes, or descriptions). Metatextual statements are one of the most important signals of *the transformation of sentences into a text* or, if one prefers, a *discourse*. If I were to defend Mayenowa's earlier thesis, I could say that metatexts are the most definite, formalized signs of an "organizing consciousness." A metatext is always a sign of the "I" of the author, a signal of the presence of the subject of the discourse. The basic function of a metatext is precisely to weld the elements of the text together: to weld not sentences (which anaphors do) but to weld the suprasentence *structure of the text*.[25]

Fourth, the normative nature of Mayenowa's conception implies directives for transforming incoherent texts into coherent ones. The written language may be incoherent on its primary level, Mayenowa says. But while reading the text, the reader can create a coherent version, with the reservation that this version is not the author's but the reader's. Her explanation here is identical with Roman Ingarden's concept of concretization with all its consequences. The effect of concretization, Ingarden writes, is different from a text, thus an object of concretization. The concretization (as a process) depends on filling gaps in the initial version (read:

[24] A. Wierzbicka, „Metatekst w tekście" (Metatext in Text), [in:] OSP, p. 106.

[25] Cf. M. Płachecki, K. Zaleski, "Metatekst w tekście krytycznym" (Metatext in Critic Text), [in:] *Badania nad krytyką literacką*, ed. by J. Sławiński, Wrocław 1974.

on making it coherent). The differentiations of this type (text and concretization, text and communication, text and the reading process, etc.) are an echo of the fundamental epistemological problem of the 20th century, the dualism of fact and situation. This dualism undoubtedly has heuristic value, but its basic methodological flaw, or consequence, is its inability to overcome the separation between facts (language, text, poetics) and situations (reading, communication). I will return to this point in the last part.

An example of the texts that M. R. Mayenowa proposes to subject to coherence transformations are dialogues. The structures of these discourses, according to her, are incoherent for two reasons: first, the producer is not one person and, second, the replies of the dialogues are not formally interconnected. Only after gaps have been filled can one speak of coherence. An example of such an incoherent dialogue would be:

A – How much does a ticket to the concert cost?
B – Forty złoty.
A – That's very expensive.
B – No, it's not. If you calculate the costs of maintaining such a large orchestra, it turns out that the ministry must provide a substantial subsidy.

Its transformation into a coherent text would be: "How much does a ticket to the concert cost? A ticket to the concert costs forty złoty. A ticket to the concert costs forty złoty, that's very expensive. (You would realize that) a ticket that costs forty złoty isn't very expensive, if you calculated..." (PT, p. 266).

I will not quote any further examples of incoherent texts (and their transformations); among them are a lyric monologue and a narration from a novel. I believe that Mayenowa's analysis of incoherence in dialogues *is not concerned with dialogues at all*. Rather only one factor in her analysis causes incoherence: the given text is not a series of formally interconnected sentences and there are no *repetitions* between the replies. If the given version can be transformed into a linear series of such sentences, Mayenowa says that after adding coherence elements to the primary version, we get a coherent text. If that is impossible, the text is incoherent. The best example for her is a conversation in which each speaker says a sentence on a different subject. My assumption that the thesis of the incoherence of dialogues *camouflages*

the problem of formal interconnection of the sentences could be confirmed by the existence of dialogues in which the replies are interconnected (by repetitions). Here is my transformation of the dialogue quoted above, which in light of her premises it is difficult to regard as incoherent.

– How much does a ticket to the concert cost?
– To the concert? Forty złoty.
– Forty... That's very expensive.
– Expensive? No, it's not. If you calculate...

But it is not difficult to observe that the criterion for textual coherence in these examples is syntactic in the extreme.

Fifth, the thesis of textual coherence dominated by a cognitive function and of the incoherence of literary texts at the language level can also only be understood as a normative one. It is difficult to accept without additional assumptions that the norms for coherence in a literary text can be expressed by the norms for coherence in non-literary texts. I cannot agree with her suggestion that analyzing a fragment of a literary text, "*let us forget that we have the beginning of a novel before us.* Let us treat the text as a written text and apply the same methods for interpreting it as a coherent text that we applied to the history textbook example,"[26] or with the introductory proposal to the analysis of *Stepy akermańskie* (*Akermans' Steppes*): "Let us look at a well-known text as if it were a text from daily life" (PT, p. 311).

I am aiming toward this conclusion: the coherence mechanisms described by M. R. Mayenowa are *uncharacteristic of literary texts*, even if we believe they refer only to the primary, language layer of a work. Contemporary theoretical-literary thought assumes that literary texts are *peculiar* texts that cannot be reduced to other types of language communications. Literary communication cannot begin by *forgetting* the peculiarity of a text but only by *remembering* (bring to bear) the maximum number of conventions, rules, or situations typical for the given discourse. Ignoring the literary peculiarities of a text in an analysis denotes the negation of the *object* under study. In short, forgetting that I have the "beginning

[26] M. R. Mayenowa, "Spójność tekstu a postawa odbiorcy" (Textual Coherence and the Position of Receiver), [in:] OSP, p. 200.

of a novel" or a sonnet and not a text from daily life in front of me, I break with the rules of literary communication. Then I would be reading not a literary text but some *other language object*, a text as a collection of sentences: from a newspaper, from a textbook, from a scholarly article.

Finally, the last problem concerns the interpretation of the function of presupposition in literary texts. (I will maximally accentuate the argument for clarity's sake.)

Either coherence derives exclusively from the formal interconnections between sentences and such coherence can be described by linguistic methods, or the presuppositions and extralanguage (extratextual) knowledge of the reader are also welding factors in a text, which would mean that linguistic description of coherence mechanisms is inadequate. Irena Bellert has written: "There is a dependence of the semantic interpretation of a coherent text on the hearer's knowledge about the world, since a set of conclusions is obtainable not only on the grounds of the rules of language and deductive reasoning, but also on the grounds of the known facts about the world."[27]

Mayenowa's conception breaks open most clearly at this point because she declares herself for both positions.

But the second position on presuppositions introduces *extratextual knowledge* into the problem of coherence. This knowledge has no formal linguistic expression. If we agree with Oswald Ducrot that "one ought to include presuppositions in the contents of a discourse, that one should regard them as integral parts of the meaning,"[28] then coherence cannot be described in syntactic categories, and the coherence of a literary text cannot be reduced to just the formal language and intersentence components.

This ends my discussion of M. R. Mayenowa's conception of textual coherence. The final form of this conception was shaped primarily by the failure to separate adequately the goals of a linguist's coherence analysis from the goals of a literary theorist desiring to describe a text from the point of view of literary communication.

[27] Bellert, *op. cit.*

[28] O. Ducrot, "Les Présupposés, conditions d'emploi ou éléments de contenu," [in:] *Recherches sur les systèmes signifiants*, ed. by J. Rey-Debove, The Hague 1973.

Professor Mayenowa's generosity weighed on this conception, too. In synthesizing the results of many different analyses, she did not avoid the self-contradictory ones, perhaps less self-contradictory than subordinated to different goals and schools of thought.

3

Below I wish to present some of my own thoughts on the coherence of literary texts. Because of the tentative character of these considerations, I will formulate my observations as a series of hypotheses.

First, I propose to distinguish clearly two concepts: a *multi-sentence linkage* or series (discourse) and a *text*. The concept of a text cannot be reduced to that of a series of sentences or vice versa: a series of sentences is not a model of a text. Study of series of sentences, their mutual interconnections, mechanisms for their transformation and generation is a task for linguistics (text grammar). Study of a text, however, is a task for poetics. A multi-sentence series (discourse) is only one, although basic, level of a literary text; the sentence units are the basis for the existence of more complex textual structures. The linguistic forms of discourse coherence (anaphora, description, indexes, etc.) are forms of connection only in sentence series and are not the exclusive or even the main categories of coherence in literary texts. Literary texts have their own textual categories that cannot be described with linguistic tools. And these suprasentence structures in literary texts perform the welding function more powerfully than the lexical or grammatic connectors. Every type of juxtaposition or even change of narrator (from *I* to *He*, for instance) causes a change of the coherence mechanisms in a literary text, although it does not disturb the formal, linguistic forms between individual sentences. It is necessary also to distinguish the linguistic mechanisms of any language statement from the peculiarities of literary texts. The category of newspaper notes certainly differs from the category of literary work.

Second, both text grammarians and M. R. Mayenowa have confused two theoretical problems in their work. The first one is

the *development of a multi-sentence series* (discourse), the second is textual *coherence*. The mixing of these two questions caused the contradiction between the syntactic and semantic methods for analyzing coherence mentioned above. Thus, I propose to include only syntactic analysis of units larger than a sentence in the problem of a developing or growing series of sentences (discourse). This is the proper place for the analysis of thematic-rematic relations, for analysis of the welding function of lexical repetitions, of anaphoric or discussive expressions. The mechanisms for developing a multi-sentence series (discourse) can be described entirely in linguistic categories. Moreover, they can be presented in a formal notation, for instance as a schemat for the derivation of sentences. Grammar norms govern syntax of series in this sense, and their representations are the respective language categories. Without going further into detail: we speak of the development of a multi-sentence series when we are interested in the relations of the connections between successive sentences in a series. The mechanisms for development can be more or less explicit; the components of the connections (anaphoras, repetitions, indexes, etc.) are more or less exposed in the structure of the linear succession. M. R. Mayenowa deals with just this phenomenon.

A literary text, however, develops on higher levels than the immediate sentence succession. This problem is well known among specialists studying the narration, poetic language or plot structures. One can speak of the development of metrical or stylistic series, but in each case a different level of the text is being described and different scholarly tools are used. Each level of the text develops according to its own rules (metric level, narration level,[29] plots, or composition), but the rules of all these levels determine the nature of the unfolding of a literary text and its coherence.

The analysis of the variety and interdependence of these different series is in turn the whole pleasure of the scholar of poetics.

Coherence of literary texts, however, is quite different. It is

[29] Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–77, attempts to apply description of the development of sentences. He distinguishes a progressive style, a non-progressive style, and a locally changing style. Such localization of the narrative style depends on breaking with the previous principle for the development of the discourse at some point in the text.

exclusively semantic and communicative and does not depend on the immediate succession of the sentences. Above all there are texts in which the language level does not form an unfolding series of sentences. Among them are iconic presentations of the thought process, which linguists regard as examples of incoherent texts. I prefer to say that on the sentence level a disturbance of the unfolding mechanism or the construction occurs, but on the text level, at the narration *technique* level (convention) there is coherence. The study of textual coherence belongs to the sphere of literary communication, but the study of formal connections betwen sentences belongs to the theory of discourse or the theory of the development of language statements. A researcher who analyzes the mechanisms for the development of a multi-sentence series aims, clearly, to formulate conclusions about the general principles for the development of every discourse, but the syntax of the development of sentences is quite remote from the problems of textual poetics and literary communication.

The best example of the difference between the development of a multi-sentence series (discourse) and textual coherence is a set of sentences Mayenowa classifies as an incoherent text.

> The cinema was located on Puławska St.; Puławska St. is one of the streets in Warsaw; the streets in Warsaw have such a shape; such a shape can be represented by these comparisons, etc.[30]

Note that these sentences in the terminology of the text grammarians and M. R. Mayenowa possess the forms of coherence, repetition: the final element of each sentence is repeated at the beginning of the next. Other coherence can be added to this discourse.

"The cinema is located on Puławska St. (because) Puławska St. is one of the streets in Warsaw, (but) the streets in Warsaw have such a shape, etc."

It is clear, however, that regardless of the number of formal connections between these sentences Professor Mayenowa would regard this text as incoherent. It is logical to regard it as a collection of sentences and not a text, but I will disregard that issue.

[30] M. R. Mayenowa, "Inwentarz pytań do teorii tekstu" (An Inventory of Questions on Text Theory), [in:] STiJ, pp. 293–294.

M. R. Mayenowa would say this text is incoherent because it can be developed infinitely. It has a beginning but no end. She would be correct. But that is precisely the problem, for formal connections between sentences (coherence in Mayenowa's terminology) do not establish or assure textual coherence!!! We can find many types of connectors in the given multi-sentence series that should weld the text, and yet the text is incoherent! Thus, textual coherence arises on a completely different level than the relationship of connections between successive sentences of discourses. The example analyzed by Mayenowa shows clearly that syntactic elements of sentence development (discourse) and textual coherence are two different things and that the first does not assure the second.

The existing terminology cannot be changed so I propose to distinguish the level of "intersentence coherence" (formally the discourse level) from the level of "textual coherence."

To me only a researcher who studies the kinds of connections between the different levels of the text moves in the field of textual coherence. The types and forms of development of each level of text are different: line, plot, narration, etc. Certainly the development of each of these levels is one of the elements of textual coherence. The essential problem of coherence concerns the relationships between the various levels; the relationship between narration and plot, dialogues and narration, narration and space, plot and time, lexica and symbolism of suprasentence structures, etc. The existence of relations between these levels causes us to treat a language discourse as a literary work.

Research on coherence understood in this way assigns a central role to a reader's presuppositions and extratextual, intertextual knowledge. Because of this, textual coherence is a central problem of literary communication. For the study of discourse coherence is an observable phenomenon like the physical properties of a solid body: they can be measured, counted, drawn. But for the study of poetics coherence is an element of the communication situation in a text and thus the central problem in reading. For a linguist every non-linear notation is incoherent.

For the study of literary constructions, however, a text is incoherent only if its non-linearity cannot be overcome during reading, if the textual signs cannot be decoded within the culture common

to the producer and receiver. The difference between the linguistic and communication treatment of coherence is the difference between text grammar and poetics. Van Dijk states the matter clearly: the transformational-generative concept of a text "does not directly account for the very intricate factors of *literary communication*: socio-cultural or esthetic norms and change of norms, the interpretation of individual texts, and of the relations between the text and its context, etc."[31]

Here the researcher of poetics and literary communication must clearly define the boundaries of his interests. The coherence of literary texts belongs to the same intertextual space (*déjà lu*) as all the conventions of discourse that serve to create literary meaning. For the study of literary communications every type of coherence in a text presupposes coherence connections in the intertextual sphere of the given type of discourse, stored in the recent or remote literary traditions. The difference here is not one of *methodology*, but a difference between objects. Linguist study of the development of a discourse (text grammar) and the study of literary communication in a text are not different approaches to the same language object but different *disciplines* that study different *things*. If someone claims that the general theory of texts illuminates the structure of literary texts although it does not include literary communication, then he believes that, for example, it is possible to describe the structure of a radio without including the existence of radio waves and electricity.

The principle of literary communication is the assumption that the language notation presupposes certain categories, processes, or relationships (receiver, tradition, convention, intertextuality, etc.) of which it becomes a part, and a new object for study comes into existence in this way. The object of interest of poetics and literary communications is not a language notation (fact) but a new whole, a communication situation composed of a text and its presupposed relations and categories. If presuppositions are, as Benveniste says, a resource for the speaker to create a common world with his listener, within which a dialogue takes place, then such "assumed

[31] Van Dijk, *op. cit.*

information" does not apply only to the sentence level but to outlines, conventions, or genres of discourse. Thus, as one speaks of language presuppositions, one also must include text presupposition, which Jonathan Culler calls pragmatic and rhetoric presuppositions,[32] in studies of literary communication (coherence). Moreover, just as language competence determines one's ability to recognize language presuppositions so a reader's textual competence and literary cultivation determine his ability to detect textual presuppositions.

Thus, the third thesis is that textual coherence is a convention and only a convention. There are no sentence arrangements in literary communication that are incoherent.

Obviously, the reference point for language coherence norms is the norm of language clarity of a discourse, statements in which the coherence relations at each level (phonetic, syntactic, semantic, lexical, etc.) are in a state of imperceptible homeostasis. The measure of the coherence of such discourses is primarily the degree of standardization of the particular language connections: from word order to sentence modality. The zero and neutral level of discourse coherence is its linguistic correctness.[33] However, the disturbance of any of these levels changes the language coherence of the entire discourse. The measure of these changes is always the disturbance of socially neutral standards. Such disturbances can proceed in two directions: either toward deviations, such as aphatic ones, that lead to the disintegration of the interpretation of particular levels of a discourse or toward deviations (also on various levels) caused by poeticness. If the first type is measured on a scale of the disturbance of language norms, the second

[32] In the article "Presuppositions and Intertextuality," [in:] *Modern Language Notes*, 1976, which I follow here J. Culler uses the term "intertextuality." In Polish terminology "intertextuality" is meant by the term "literary tradition." I must add that analyses of the pragmatics of texts play a role in Mayenowa's conception of coherence.

[33] Cf. my glosses to the analysis of the comic resulting from the infringement of the textual coherence in J. Ziomek, *Powinowactwa literatury*. Warszawa 1980 – W. Bolecki, "Suwerenność i hegemonia" (Sovereignty and Hegemony), *Teksty*, 1981, No. 2.

is only a manifestation of convention. In the first case we are not dealing with texts but with *collections of sentences*, typical of psychiatric patients: correctly built sentences that constitute neither a syntactic whole nor a content whole.[34]

In the second case texts are only more or less coherent depending on the type of poeticness, in particular depending on the degree of the concreteness of the situational elements. Decoding such coherence as convention belongs to the levels of literary culture that Janusz Sławiński has called the levels of literary knowledge and competence.[35]

But let us return to the text. Mayenowa defined as incoherent:

> The cinema was located on Puławska St.; Puławska St. is one of the streets in Warsaw; the streets in Warsaw have such a shape: such a shape can be represented by these comparisons, etc.

As was shown earlier the syntactic connections between sentences do not make the text coherent. If we assume that it does not have an appropriate intertextual space, that it does not meet the semantic and convention norms of a discourse which permit the building of such discourses, then we must agree with Mayenowa that the discourse is an incoherent text. In other words, we cannot find a literary practice that places the given text's type of sentence development in some tradition of discourse. But is suffices to assume that it is a parody of a description, that it is an example of a kind of recognizable convention of discourse, to describe it as a coherent text. The forms of coherence would then be the norms of parody permitting the infringement of linguistic standards for the development of multi-sentence series. The mechanisms for structuring coherence in literary communication are always the interplay between actual texts and coherence conventions of the texts forming the intertextual space. This interplay allows us to view an apparently deviant text (the incoherent one here) as

[34] Jan Józef Lipski drew my attention to this during discussion of this paper in Rynia.

[35] J. Sławiński, "Socjologia literatury i poetyka historyczna" (Sociology of Literature and Historical Poetics), [in:] *Dzieło. język. tradycja*, pp. 65–66.

a poetic text, as one in which the faulty language, the breaking of the rules of discourse, semantic anomalies, etc., are new literary qualities.

The fourth thesis is that texts with a predominantly poetic function have reinforced coherence connections. For example, metaphors increase the number of relations that join the separate language levels. Metaphor, thus, multiplies coherence although it is achieved at the cost of syntactic-lexical coherence connections. It is essential to distinguish the surface connections in a given discourse (for example, the plan of sentence successions) from the hidden paradygmatic connections. Van Dijk is correct in saying that the condition of textual coherence is the existence of a deep semantic structure. Poetic texts intensify the deep, extrasentence semantic interconnections. "Many modern texts," writes van Dijk, "do not respect the rule of linear coherence. In such cases there is no identifiable semantic relation between two or more subsequent sentences. This violation of one of the basic conditions of text coherence is often compensated on the level of the whole text: the semantic deep structures of mutually incoherent sentences can reveal a coherent textual deep structure, especially in modern poetry."[36] Poeticness (literariness) always introduces paradygmatic connections into a particular, syntagmatic sequence of statements. The status of a poetic discourse in coherence theory should be exactly the same as the status of presupposition. Presupposition mechanisms and poetical mechanisms mean that in reading we introduce those connections that are not formally present in the particular sentences into the semantics of the discourse. The semantics of a literary text cannot be formalized because textual meaning is not a language category as parts of speech or of sentences are, rather it is an element of communication. Thus, attempts to describe coherence (as an element of textual semantics) using linguistic procedures (a formalized semantic notation) is wrong from the outset. Literary communication is an intertextual activity. It creates a space in which looking at a tree we see a forest.

[36] Van Dijk, *op. cit.*; cf. Červenka, "O tematycznym następstwie," p. 88.

A linguist's task is the opposite: he represents the forest with a schemat of trees and gives rules for the derivation of the latter.[37]

Conclusion

20th-century literature provides us with many examples of texts whose poetics rely on upsetting the norms of correct language discourse. From the time of cubist poetry and stream-of-consciousness prose all the levels of a text have been subject to disintegration. The literary culture of the 20th century has developed a distinct paradigm of conventions that can be recognized as the norms for literary discourses. Such norms are conventions.

Finally, does such a conception of coherence show us a new area for research on literary texts? Does it only apply the term "coherence" to studies that could do without it? The category of coherence as a convention appearing on different levels of a literary text allows us not only precisely to name and describe the phenomenon of the poetics of these levels but also to see a characteristic element of poetics on which many literary operations have taken place in the 20th century.[38] On the other hand, coherence as types of interconnections between levels draws attention to the quality of a text that shapes its structural character. Examining the structural character of a text we also perceive the

[37] The sharpest polemic with the description of textual semantics in the formal categories of modern linguistics and thus with M. A. K. Halliday, J. P. Thorne, and R. Ohman, among others, is S. E. Fish, "What Is Stylistics and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things about It?," [in:] *Approaches to Poetics*, ed. by S. Chatman, New York 1973.

[38] Cf. M. Szybistowa, "Granice spójności tekstu" (The Limits of Textual Coherence), [in:] STiJ; M. Indyk, "Granice spójności narracji" (The Limits of Narration Coherence), [in:] *Studia o narracji*, ed. by J. Błoński, S. Jaworski, J. Sławiński, Wrocław 1982; E. Kuźma, "Przestrzeń w poezji awangardowej a problem spójności tekstu" (Space in Avant-garde Poetry and Problem of Textual Coherence), [in:] *Przestrzeń i literatura*, ed. by M. Głowiński, A. Okopień-Sławińska, Wrocław 1978. The last author unfortunately confused the categories of the linguistic construction of a text (sentence coherence) and the coherence of the represented world (space denoted by the sentences in the text), but he showed coherence in an interesting light as a problem of historical poetics.

role of coherence between its levels. Not only do sentences cohere, the text as a whole does, too. It is only a step now to the claim that studies of coherence of a text are studies of its literariness.[39]

Transl. by *Jan Patrick Lee*

[39] I must add two thoughts: these considerations would have been impossible without the provoking role of Mayenowa's works. The sharp tone of the article results from the presentation only of controversial points. There are many details in Mayenowa's work that today belong to the basic canon of the theoretical-literary knowledge. Second, the development of textual coherence is not a new problem in Polish theoretical works. J. Sławiński presented it most fully many years ago (with no help of the term "coherence") in his article "Semantyka wypowiedzi literackiej" (The Semantics of Literary Discourse), [in:] *Dzieło. język. tradycja.*