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## Bridging the Gap Between Literary Studies and Linguistics: A New Attempt

- Ekkehard König/Manfred Pfister, *Literary Analysis and Linguistics*. Grundlagen der Anglistik und Amerikanistik, vol. 42. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag 2017. 256 S. [Preis: EUR 19,95] ISBN 978-3-503-17186-6.

Linguistics and literary analysis look back on a long history of commonalities and differences. While classical philology was an endeavour that amalgamated the two fields naturally – the study of the Latin and Greek languages being possible only through the literature and that of the literature only through the study of those languages, 20<sup>th</sup> century developments in scholarship, such as the Chomskyan turn in linguistics, did a lot to prevent further meaningful conversations between linguists and literary scholars. At the same time, literary analysis never really stopped making use of linguistic models, modes of thinking, and terminology in their practices of text analysis, and linguists also did look at the particularities of language used in literature. The structuralist approach to literary analysis, which still dominates most text-oriented methods in the literature departments, is deeply embedded in the concepts of structuralist linguistics. Furthermore, some other fields with a long history of their own, including stylistics, the study of metaphor, the use of language varieties in fiction and film, or the broad area of rhetoric have also provided ample meeting-ground for linguists and literary scholars in the past decades.

It may therefore appear as if the two areas of scholarship and learning were harmoniously blended. However, the study programs of most universities have in fact »compartmentalized« the study of literature and the study of language »into two separate disciplines that took little notice of, and little interest in, each other«, as Ekkehard König and Manfred Pfister state in the preface to the volume under consideration in this review (9). It has also been my experience and that of many colleagues that, much as one might try to highlight the indebtedness of literary analysis to linguistic questions in literary classes, and *vice versa*, the relevance of literature for the study of language in linguistic courses, students find it difficult to establish the relationship between the fields. The book by König and Pfister, aiming at overcoming precisely that separation, is therefore a most welcome publication. The book can be used as a course book in classes that combine literary and linguistic objects of study, or provide a more general introduction to literary linguistics or linguistic literary scholarship. The authors, highly esteemed senior colleagues and emeriti of the FU Berlin – one a linguist, one a literary scholar – are the ideal co-writers for a book like this.

The book consists of eight chapters and the overall structure is mostly inspired by a linguistic perspective, starting with »Prosody and Metre« (ch. 1, pp.15-39), then moving »up« the levels of linguistic analysis, with »Syntax« (ch. 2, pp. 41-64) and semantics (»Meaning: Metaphor and Metonymy«, ch. 3, pp. 65-94) to transphrastic and pragmatic levels of analysis, including a short chapter on »Irony« (ch. 4, pp. 95-114), and a longer one on »Narration, Deixis and Creation of Perspectives« (ch. 5, pp. 115-165). Three more chapters cover some ground that readers of Manfred Pfister's seminal contributions to the study of English Literature are not surprised to see in this volume (ch. 6: »Conversational Interaction and Dramatic Speech«, pp. 167-207; ch. 7: »Intertextuality«, pp 209-233; and ch. 8: »Heteroglossia«, pp. 235-255). These chapters, far from presenting any rehashed positions, are up-to-date considerations of these areas, concisely summarised with a view to the purpose of the book and with a stronger linguistic

perspective than is usually the case. One could, of course, have chosen a different structure for the book, using, for instance, the categories and distinctions of literary analysis as points of departure and then looking what linguistics has to offer in each case. However, all major literary genres are dealt with, and whoever has taught introductory classes in literary analysis will find that the entire tool-kit of literary text analysis appears within the course of the book.

It is impossible to re-echo here the richness of information and insight provided by the individual chapters. Regarding the wide ground the book covers, most readers will be biased towards liking some chapters more than others. The present reviewer, while being fully convinced by all chapters, found the chapters on metaphor and metonymy (ch. 3), on irony (ch. 4) and on narration and perspective (ch. 5) particularly insightful and helpful. The fine chapter on prosody and metre (ch. 1) ought to be standard reading in classes that introduce students to literary analysis, and chapter 6, on speech acts and communication in drama is a brilliant exploration of Speech Act Theory (and its limitations, to which literature sometimes points) and of the complexities and artfulness of monological and dialogical speech.

One example may illustrate how the chapters work, and to what extent the volume covers, basically, the same ground as other introductions to literary studies, but is still quite different – refreshingly so. The observations on »Narration, Deixis, and the Creation of Perspectives« (ch. 5) do not start with an introduction to the narrative situations and modes of focalisation as, for instance, specified by Gerard Genette, but with a consideration of acts of narration from the perspective of Speech Act Theory (cf. 115-118). The complexity of speech acts in the novel is illustrated by looking at Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and its embedding of narrative frames. The concept of speech acts also informs later parts of that chapter. A short discussion of fictionality (cf. 118-119) that takes theoretical and literary historical positions from Sidney via Vaihinger to Defoe (*Moll Flanders*) into account is then followed by an introduction to the question of (un)reliability of narrators, which again makes many references to novels from Anglophone and European literature that illustrate the varieties of unreliable narration. The authors then introduce the linguistic concept of situation types to discuss the elements of which a narrative consists (events, processes/activities, states), and demonstrate that the progressive form expresses processes, and does so in alternation with the simple form that renders events and states, which they regard as a case of grounding, i.e. the creation of background and foreground. This is the starting point for an exploration of the temporal anchoring of sentences in narrative, and the rules of the use of tenses in narration, as well as the many deviations that can be found in literature (cf. 121-124). This is quite typical for the entire volume: The authors introduce the rules and regularities of the structure and use of language, as theorised by linguistics, and then look at the broad spectrum of rule-breaking that literature performs. They also point to the fact that literary genres and sub-genres establish rules themselves, which are then violated by later generations of writers, either playfully, as is demonstrated with a meta-ballad by Charles Stuart Calverley (cf. 125), or as a more serious reflection on the possibilities of narrative, as in a short story by Julio Cortázar (cf. *ibid.*). From the consideration of what literary and non-literary narration share, the authors then turn to the inventory of text analysis provided by narratology, but with a focus on »a few of reasonably well-established dimensions, which were selected on the basis of how they are signalled and expressed by particular linguistic devices, both grammatical and lexical« (128). A short presentation of the concepts of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration, and overt vs. covert narrators is then followed by a longer section on deixis and other ways in which utterances in narrative texts are related to context; further indicators of perspective (expression containing *-self*, non-declarative sentences, i.e., interrogatives, imperatives and exclamations, and parentheticals). A further section is devoted to the representation of speech, thought and perception. In these sections, the question of perspective, that has occupied and riddled narratology so much, is approached from a linguistic stance. The exact analysis of individual expressions indicative of different, or shifting, centres of orientation that this chapter

performs is a plea for close reading and for heightened attention to how worlds are created with words. The same holds for the volume in general. Three more sections follow: a detailed analysis of the beginning of James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that elaborates on how the vocabulary and syntax of the passage establish the boy Stephen as the centre of perception; a discussion of temporal structures in narrative beyond grammatical *tempus* (such as the various possible relationships between story-time and discourse time); and an introduction to meta-narrative and metafictional levels of narration.

In all chapters of the book, König and Pfister manage to elegantly weave together structural observation on the one hand, and analyses and interpretations of the various functions of language use at particular moments in literary history on the other. This reminds students that theoretical concepts are put to best use in precise historical application. Without using the literary examples in a strictly diachronic way, the book all in all also amounts to a good survey of the historical changes in literary language. The many close readings of either brief examples, or longer passages or even entire poems are all brilliant illustrations of how the detailed analysis of the way language is used will render sound, convincing, and enlightening interpretations of literary texts.

A few minor complaints concern the ›usability‹ of the book. In general, the publisher, rather than the authors, needs to be taken to task for a layout that looks quite outdated. One may well have some reservations as to the increasing ›didacticisation‹ of books aimed at a student market, but a book with virtually no illustrations and only a few words emphasised in bold print in each chapter may find it hard to compete on the market today. While each chapter has a concise list of references that guide the reader towards more in-depth study, it is absolutely incomprehensible to me that the book lacks an index of terms. If a student who has read the book wishes to return to a definition, or an example, they will have to go through the chapter again. Doing this, they are unlikely to see that many concepts are of interest in more than one chapter, because the notions are relevant on various levels of analysis. One of the main achievements of the book, namely to point to the rich and multifaceted use of linguistic thinking in literary analysis, is obscured by the lack of cross references and indices. What the book would have profited from most, however, is a glossary which repeats the most central terms and definitions and then refers back to the sections of the book in which they are discussed and illustrated. Not every student of literature is required to study a full list of classes in linguistics anymore, so that such readers are likely to take a repeated look at how a concept from linguistics is defined.

While most terms and concepts are at least briefly explained and illustrated with an example in the chapters, sometimes either the authors seem to think that no explanation was necessary, or the need for brevity required them to skip the details. For instance, in the discussion of different types of rhyme in the first chapter, the reader finds one meagre half sentence on alliterative rhyme: »Rhymes based on the identity of the onset (alliteration, ›*Stabreim*‹) or of the entire syllable (›identical rhyme‹) are also used in certain literary traditions, which may differ significantly from language to language.« (17) Can the student extract much helpful information from this sentence, if they have not yet seen alliterative verse and understood how it works, and the role it played in Old and Middle English poetry? Also, when the terms ›masculine‹ and ›feminine‹ rhyme are introduced, would it not have made sense to explain why rhymes on one or two syllables, respectively, are termed like that? Sometimes words occur that would require further explanation in their immediate context, such as »the illocutionary point (purpose)« (96), or »logophors« (141), or »the Gricean maxim of Manner« (123 – here a cross-reference to chapter 6.1.4, where the maxims are discussed, would have helped). The authors' erudition is palpable on every page, and while the style in general is adequately elevated for a scholarly book, in some cases the authors seems to aim beyond the assumed readership of this book: One wonders whether the use of Latin expressions is necessary, since few students today actually have much

Latin available. Here are three examples. The first is: »[...] indications of playfulness or insufficient knowledge, such as ›I am only kidding‹ or *relata refero*, ›I am only telling you what I heard‹« (117). Is the point here to introduce »*relata refero*« as a technical term, or would the English version not have sufficed, if not? Again, an entry in an index would have signalled whether an important term was introduced here. Second, the sentence immediately following presents another Latinism, but this time »a traditional distinction is drawn *inter alia* between [...]« (ibid.), and a third one is found on the next page: »fictionality has been recognized as a *differentia specifica* of literature« (118). For the latter two, simple English expressions would have sufficed. Furthermore, when English words are used as technical terms or as an illustrative example, this is expressed through italicisation, and non-English words are of course frequently italicised as well, and the use of bold print adds further complexity to the layout. This raises the question whether some editing with a view to the target audience would not have made this fine book more accessible.

All in all, the book by Ekkehard König and Manfred Pfister contributes to the renewed effort to bring the study of language and literature closer to each other once again. Analysing and interpreting a broad range of literary texts from the vantage point of linguistics, it serves as a more than welcome reminder that linguistics and literary analysis are by no means strange bedfellows, but rather the ideal combination for a deeper understanding of how language and literature work. Seeing that the division between linguistics and literary studies is institutionalised in the study programs of most universities, it will probably take more books like this one, many more co-operations between linguists and literary scholars within and beyond the classroom, and quite a few changes to the modules in most BA and MA programs to overcome the unfortunate gap that exists between the two branches of our discipline. It is to be hoped that more projects will follow the example set in the book under review here.

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