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Preface

This is by no means the first book dedicated to the dialogue between linguistic and literary studies. It is, however, to our knowledge, the first book on this subject to be co-authored by a linguist and a literary scholar and critic, who jointly explore the uses of linguistics for literary studies and the challenges of literary texts for linguistic analysis. Ekkehard König and Manfred Pfister both taught in the English department of the Free University of Berlin in the last decade of the 20th century, when they discovered to their own surprise a strong mutual interest in each other's subject. There was, for once, this *rara avis*, a colleague in linguistics who actually enjoyed reading poetry or going to see plays, and one in the literature department who did not even shy back from the rigorous abstractions of, say, formal grammar and formal semantics. The discovery was as pleasant as it was rare in a situation in which 'philology', or the 'love of words', that time-honoured ideal, which had bracketed the study of language and literature under the auspices of Greek and Latin studies in earlier generations, was no longer really operative in the modern foreign language departments, compartmentalized into two separate disciplines that took little note of, and little interest in, each other. The first fruit of this discovery was a series of seminars co-taught by us, in which we explored the uses of key concepts such as deixis, performativity or figurative speech in the analysis of poetry, narrative texts and drama. The success we had in this with our students, many of whom prepared to become teachers of 'English' – i.e. the language, the literature and the culture at secondary schools – then encouraged us to continue this project beyond the class room and this led as a second fruit to the present book-length study, written in its greater parts within the hospitable and inspiring frame the Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies (FRIAS), which had invited us to work there as Senior Fellows.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the fellows and directors of the FRIAS for their encouragement and support as well as our graduate student Sarah D. R. Sallmann for her painstaking and intelligent help in preparing the final version of the book for print, generously interrupting for this her work on her own dissertation.

Berlin, Dezember 2016

Manfred Pfister

Freiburg, Dezember 2016

Ekkehard König

Introduction

When we began to offer our seminars on literature and linguistics in the 1990s, we were by no means the first to engage in such a venture. In fact, the project of conjoining literary and linguistic studies had actually been an academic fashion of sorts already in the 1960s and 1970s when, in the context of a revival of classical rhetoric and the rise of structuralisms of various descent and description and inspired by father-figures in the field such as Roman Jakobson (Jakobson, 1971) or Leo Spitzer (Spitzer, 1948), many of the younger generation set their hope in the rapprochement of literary studies and linguistics for a study of literature that would be closer to ‘scientific’ standards of objectivity and conceptual clarity than to the learned intuitionism of the *Art of Interpretation* (Staiger, 1955). It is telling that a number of associations and periodical publications were launched at the time expressly with that agenda on their title pages, among them, in Germany, *LiLi. Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* (1971ff) or the international *Journal of Literary Semantics* (1972ff) and, somewhat later, *Language and Literature. Journal of the Poetics and Linguistics Association* (1992ff). In these heydays, the building of bridges between literary and linguistic studies was pursued with great vigour and the optimistic, perhaps too optimistic, expectation of thus turning literary studies – or *Literaturwissenschaft*, as German academics came to prefer to call it somewhat pretentiously – into a veritable science, one that would be readily teachable to grammar school and university students. It was the defeat of such exaggerated expectations in the first place which eventually caused the sharp decline of the project in the late 1980s. As the editors of *LiLi* wrote in the introduction to volume 150 of their journal (2008) in rather disillusioned retrospect: “The guardedly hoped-for convergence [between literature and linguistics] did not materialize [...] and rather than building new bridges, existing ones were torn down” (Klein, Wolfgang/Ralf Schnell, 2008; for a more comprehensive and forward-looking discussion of the fortunes of literary linguistics see Klein, 2015). But disillusionment with exaggerated expectations is not the whole story behind the flagging of interest in literary linguistics. There were also reasons inherent in certain developments within the disciplines involved in it. The interface between the two components shrank with, on the one hand, dominant research programmes in linguistics abstracting more and more from any kind of contextual embedding of language in concrete situations, texts or cultural environments, seeking new interdisciplinary contacts with cognitive science, rather than the humanities

(e. g. in neuro- or psycho-linguistics, computational linguistics or psychology) and in its increasing dedication to abstract formalisms that were extended to more and more specialized and arcane aspects. Literary studies, on the other hand, expanded their territory in the direction of more comprehensive ‘cultural studies’, among them gender studies in particular, and new kinds of ‘Historicism’ which triggered a meta-theoretical turn that could lead to discourses as arcane to the outsider as those of modern linguistics.

In the meantime, however, the time seems to be right again for a re-launch of literary linguistics or linguistically inspired literary analysis, prompted in parts by recent developments both within linguistics and literary studies and now largely without the utopian expectations of a complete merger and a total ‘scientification’ of literary analysis and the teaching of literature. A few recent instances of this are Fabb, 2002, Stockwell, 2002, Fludernik, 2004, Gregoriou, 2009, Klein, 2015. We also believe that literary studies can and will profit from linguistics and vice versa, particularly if one focuses on the area where they intersect most directly and closely, i.e. on the literary work of art as a verbal structure and the aesthetic uses of language it employs. In its structure, our book follows, to a certain extent, the lead of linguistic descriptions in terms of different ‘levels of analyses’, proceeding from (prosodic) phonology to syntax, semantics and pragmatics, but also manifests another organizing principle in its analyses of major speech activities (narration, dialogue) in literary texts and their embedding into the cultural context of other texts (intertextuality) and other languages (heteroglossia). We will take into account the recent linguistic developments in ‘transphrastic’ analysis and semantics (for the study of narrative perspective, of irony, metaphor and other forms of figurative speech, etc.), in pragmatics and speech act theory (for the analysis of deixis, of acts of enunciation and conversational interaction) and in theories of performance and performativity (for the study of the interrelations between text and performance, language, *langue* and *parole*). Moreover, we will consider the mediality of language between spoken, written and printed text and the intermedial transpositions between verbal, visual, musical and multimedia arts, which have become so important in contemporary artistic practices and which linguists had not included in their analyses for a long time. This also applies to intertextuality, a notion coined first by literary and cultural theorists, though of immediate concern for any study of how language works both in literary and non-literary texts. Finally, our book also addresses the interactions or interferences of languages in texts, the kinds of linguistic hybridity, ‘heteroglossia’ or in-between-ness caused by language contacts in intercultural situations, to which first and above all translation-, colonial and postcolonial studies have drawn attention and which has by now become a flourishing research agenda for both literary critics and linguists.

Our book aims at readers who want to learn more about how language works in everyday ordinary verbal communication as well as in memorable works of art and how the principles of ordinary communication interact with artistic creativity. The two interests actually rely upon and support each other across the divide in the mentalities of professional linguists and literary aficionados. After all, poems, though made of ideas, sensations or emotions, are first and foremost made of words and sentences, objects of fascination for linguists as well as poets and their readers. And it is only against the background of an awareness of the rules governing ordinary language that we will be able to appreciate and describe the liberties poetic language takes with them, and the literary deviations from the norm, be they rule-breaking, rule-extending or rule-abiding regularities, in turn will put into high relief the workings of ordinary verbal behaviour. In this sense, the aesthetic language of literature and poetry is, among other things, an illuminating meta-language to the ordinary language, the core domain of linguistics which is, without this challenge, in constant danger of becoming as routine as the standard samples of ready-made text, of texts made up for the purpose of being analysed by linguists.

For this, the sample analyses of literary texts play as great a role in our book as the discussion of linguistic models. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. And the proof of linguistic models for literary studies is in the reading, in the heuristic surplus value they generate when they are confronted with great literature, with language taken to the limits of its complexity and density, suggestive power and, yes, memorable beauty. The texts we have chosen for this, many of them canonical and therefore well-known works of literature, draw upon a wide range of literary genres, periods and styles. If there is a distinct preference, it is for texts in English from the Renaissance to the present; this, naturally, reflects our own personal background in literary history as Anglicists and should help to make the texts and our reading of them accessible to an international readership. Our book is neither a history of English literature nor a systematic historical survey of literary linguistics in all its ramifications; it is intended as a hands-on manual meant to help enhance and refine the quality of reading texts both literary and non-literary, and as such it can do without extensive footnotes and an exhaustive bibliographical apparatus.

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