

II. RECENZJE

Frank C. Maatje, *LITERATUURWETENSCHAP. GRONDSLAGEN VOOR EEN THEORIE VAN HET LITERAIRE WERK*. Utrecht, Oosthoek's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1970, 253 pp.

The present book is grounded on the axiom that, apart from the fact that as a rule linguistic utterances are built up by signs referring to extra-linguistic objects, there are linguistic utterances of a special kind, their signs being wholly — or at any rate chiefly — non-referential. Literary works of art just belong to the latter kind of utterances, and on the acceptance of the foregoing axiom every modern theory of literature must, implicitly or explicitly, be based.

In his introduction the author first attempts to set up an axiology for a theory of literature, being obviously modelled on and simultaneously distinguished from the theoretical model of natural science. The outline of a history of literary scholarship that follows chiefly pays attention to the "intrinsic" approaches (Russian Formalism, the Prague Linguistic Cercle, R. Ingarden's ontological approach, American New Criticism, the German "Interpretative Richtung" and the French "Nouvelle Critique"). All these different trends and movements are then brought together under one common denominator, which is given by the concept of "structure", the definition of which has been apparently inspired by Roman Ingarden (*Das literarische Kunstwerk*, 1931).

The main part of the book is entirely devoted to the implications of this fundamental position. In a first chapter the polysemy of

the notion "literary" is dealt with. According to Mr. Maatje the following formula should be taken for granted: literary = fictional + valuable. From that formula a number of principles of arrangement (generally called 'style') are derived, which, hierarchically bound, constitute the structure of a particular linguistic utterance. In the second chapter precisely these principles (or patterns) of arrangement are dwelled upon, whereby special emphasis is put on the problems of literary genres and types, each of them being defined by the extra-grammatical categories of time and space. Especially the concept of 'space' in the literary work is largely elaborated and this matter deserves the reader's particular attention, for the author is a well-known specialist on the area under discussion.

The most relevant and by far most original part of the book however is its third chapter, where the literary work is given its linguistic foundations. The structural arrangements on which fictionality is based, should be described as far as possible in terms of generative-transformational grammar. Mr. Maatje states that description in terms of grammar turns out to be possible not only in the case of stylistic devices (which must be described as deviations from the norm), but also in those many instances where it can be easily shown that a mere grammatical phenomenon underlies one or other aspect of literary structure. Such instances moreover needn't always be explained as deviations, generated from the G-model. Taking into account the rather provisional position of investigations on this area, the author can only

tentatively deal with essential question, such as: if the G(= grammatical)model offers a solid basis for explaining man's ability to produce and understand language (i.e. his linguistic competence), will it then, moreover, be possible to draw up a P(= poetic)model, accounting for man's ability to produce literature (i.e. his literary competence)?

That the linguistic approach to literary problems can be extremely fruitful is demonstrated e.g. by the adequate way in which the author succeeds in solving the dilemma "either *creatio* or *mimesis*" into reconciliation, just by reducing the problem to its linguistic proportions. Considering the fact that the literary work is fictional, i.e. non-referential, the question should no longer be: what is the relation of fiction to life? but: what is the relation of the "world" in the literary work (a world constituted by means of words) to non-fictional, i.e. referential linguistic utterances? The literary work consists of a sequence (or is generated as a string) of words, and hence the idea of *creatio* forms an integrating part of the theory of literature, whereas the idea of *mimesis* is guaranteed by the consideration that the horizontal sequence of words can operate as meaningful only on account of the fact that in normal speech the same words do demonstrate their referential function.

The linguistic approach to literature has the advantage of stating explicitly, formalizing and thus giving scientific value to the intuitive presuppositions literary scholarship has until very recently been based upon. Therefore we can only regret that Mr. Maatje has not emphasized strongly enough yet the importance of a publication such as T. A. Sebeok's *Style in Language* (1960), which very recently has been called "the very beginning of scientific approach to literature"¹.

It is one of the main merits of the author of this book that he has contrived to develop in his own language (Dutch) an exact and

highly consistent terminology every scholar can operate with. A fine example is given by his discussion of the traditional form-content dichotomy (Intr., 12). Within the whole field of literary criticism it will be hard to find any other issue that has provoked more controversy and misunderstanding than this nefarious distinction — Yet how hard can it be missed even by contemporary critics! In our present study however the question of 'content' on the one hand is dealt with from an internal point of view and hence the requirement to relate subject matter to external referents appears to be a side line of literary interpretation. Content here must be understood as the totality of semantic relationships within the literary work and therefore the terms "meaning" or "semantic dimension" can as well be substituted for it. Form on the other hand should be definitely rejected as a critical concept (except in a single instance, such as "verse form"), not only because of the frequent misuse that has been made of it, but also in order to avoid vagueness and ambiguity. Mr. Maatje therefore wants it to be replaced by the term "structure". Another example of Mr. Maatje's care for clarity and accuracy as to terminological (if at least they can be called only terminological) questions is offered by his distinction between style and structure (Ch. III, 40). Style refers to the author's personal usage, his individual performance or "idiolect", which is determined by his deviations from standard usage as it is described in the general G-model. The possibility of style gives rise to the existence of some distinct features, common to the different individual usages of a number of contemporary writers. These common features however generally tend to be common structural components, that are characteristic for literary works in a given period of literary development. Structure namely refers to "the specific way in which a world is built up by means of words in the literary work". Hence the possibility of a number of related structures in literary works belonging to one and the same period of literary history. In this connection Mr. Maatje very

¹ The statement was given by T. van Dijk (univ. of Amsterdam) in the course of a discussion on the International Meeting of Scholars organized by the university of Louvain (Belgium).

properly observes that there is hardly anything more frustrating than an unspecified use of the term 'style'; if everything is called 'style', as is more than once the case in schools claiming autonomy for the literary work, then this term is deprived of every differentiating function.

Literatuurwetenschap is, as far as I can see, the first publication in its field in which the whole gamut of problems concerning the literary work has been investigated from a really scientific, i.e. chiefly linguistic point of view. Thank to his consistent approach and advanced formalizing engagement the author has been able to dwell upon interesting details that are generally omitted in works of literary theory, such as the problems of paraphrase and translation. This publication will not only be received as a valuable contribution to present literary theory; literary scholars will also find an excellent practical guide in it. Every paragraph is followed by bibliographical notes and critical comment, whereas at the end of the book there is a full list of recent publications concerning their discipline.

It was the author's primary concern to write an introductory study in which the "fundamentals of a theory of the literary work" (as the subtitle says) would be stated in a systematic way, so that it could serve as a guide for scholars and even students who are interested in a manual dealing with this complex matter in their own language. It should be admitted that Mr. Maatje has far outranked his own modest intention. *Literatuurwetenschap* is a real standard work in its own field. And therefore we are glad to know that a number of translations in the main European languages will bring it into the scope of a wider public of young scholars.

Raymond van den Broeck, Antwerpen

Gerhard Seidel, DIE FUNKTIONS-UND GEGENSTANDSBEDINGTHEIT DER EDITION. Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1970, ss. 293.

Książka, którą zaprezentował G. Seidel, jest niezbyt częstym zjawiskiem w dziedzinie

edytorstwa naukowego, które może z jednej strony poszczycić się wspaniałymi osiągnięciami praktycznymi w różnych krajach Europy, z drugiej zaś nie dysponuje odpowiednio rozbudowaną literaturą teoretyczną. Gdyby pokusić się o bardzo roboczą systematykę prac (opracowań, wypowiedzi, komentarzy) dotyczących edytorstwa, moglibyśmy wskazać na trzy ich kategorie: wypowiedzi systematyzujące metody edytorstwa naukowego, podane w związku z dokonaną poważniejszą edycją dzieł (lub dzieła) jakiegoś pisarza, instrukcje i porządkujące dyrektywy dla praktyki edytorskiej, wreszcie opracowania teoretyczne, uogólniające praktykę edytorską oraz zmierzające do wykrycia optymalnych modeli konstrukcji edytorskich.

W ostatnim okresie doszedł zgrab czwarty, ściśle tekstologiczny, o bardzo poważnych tradycjach badawczych, o dużych perspektywach również i pragmatycznych, mający poważny wpływ na edytorstwo naukowe (m. in. zagadnienia związane z ustaleniem autorstwa).

Jaką pozycję zajmuje w kręgu tak usystematyzowanych prac książka G. Seidla? Odpowiedź z konieczności nie będzie jednoznaczna, ponieważ mamy tu do czynienia z opracowaniem bardzo szczególnego typu. Z jednej strony książka ta traktuje o różnorodnych kategoriach edycji jako całości w stosunku do dzieła lub zbioru utworów istniejących materialnie również poza daną edycją (np. rękopisy, odpisy, inne wydania samoistne lub niesamoistne o bardzo różnym stosunku do tego, co wyszło spod ręki autora), z drugiej zaś bierze pod uwagę najróżnorodniejsze uwarunkowania wpływające na powstawanie dzieła i powodujące, że bardzo często, aczkolwiek mówimy o „utworze”, w gruncie rzeczy kontaktujemy się z całym, niejednokrotnie nader złożonym procesem działań i stosunków niejako „produkujących” po drodze całe serie utworów. Przy tym zaś, co godne uwagi, autor nigdy nie traci z oczu samego tekstu, tzn. jednoznacznie przez edytora i edycję określonego układu semantycznego, na którego substancję i egzystencję wpływają skomplikowane czynniki natury autorskiej i pozaautorskiej. Z tego też powodu edycja staje