


Directions in Empirical Literary Studies

Edited by
Sonia Zyngier
Marisa Bortolussi
Anna Chesnokova
Jan Auracher

John Benjamins Publishing Company



Directions in Empirical Literary Studies

In honor of Willie van Peer

Edited by

Sonia Zyngier

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Marisa Bortolussi

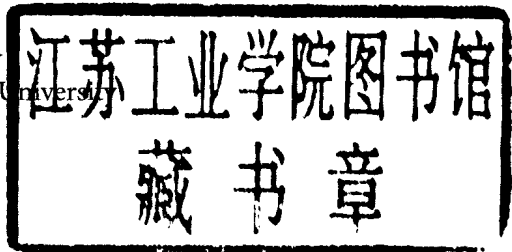
University of Alberta

Anna Chesnokova

Kyiv National Linguistic University

Jan Auracher

University of Munich



John Benjamins Publishing Company

Amsterdam / Philadelphia



™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Directions in empirical literary studies : in honor of Willie van Peer / edited by Sonia Zyngier ... [et al.].

p. cm. (Linguistic Approaches to Literature, ISSN 1569-3112 ; v. 5)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Literature--History and criticism. I. Peer, Willie van. II. Zyngier, Sonia.

PN36.P44D57 2008

809--dc22

2008003862

ISBN 978 90 272 3337 0 (Hb; alk. paper)

© 2008 – John Benjamins B.V.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by print, photoprint, microfilm, or any other means, without written permission from the publisher.

John Benjamins Publishing Co. · P.O. Box 36224 · 1020 ME Amsterdam · The Netherlands

John Benjamins North America · P.O. Box 27519 · Philadelphia PA 19118-0519 · USA

Introduction

Yet philosophers should not be specialists. For myself, I am interested in science and in philosophy only because I want to learn something about the riddle of the world in which we live, and the riddle of man's knowledge of that world. And I believe that only a revival of interest in these riddles can save the sciences and philosophy from narrow specialization and from an obscurantist faith in the expert's special skill, and in his personal knowledge and authority... (Popper 1959/1980: 23)

This volume has been designed as a tribute to Willie van Peer on the occasion of his 60th birthday for all the work he has done in promoting the area of empirical studies. For a very good reason, as our readers will soon see, junior researchers in Ukraine renamed the area: "vanPeerical studies". So, instead of a tie or a pen, we agreed the most appropriate gift would be a book that he could share with others. In putting this book together, we followed the same methodology he and Max Louwerse once used in a previous publication: "we contacted friends and colleagues from a range of disciplines, mostly from literary studies, linguistics and psychology, to probe their interest in such an enterprise. The spontaneous response we obtained was so overwhelming that the present volume could be brought together, containing studies from leading scholars in a variety of fields" (Louwerse & van Peer 2002: ix). The difference here, however, is that we cannot say it all started on a warm summer evening, as the four editors work in four different countries in three continents, with contrasting climates, different time zones and various conditions.

All the contributors in this book have in some way or another worked with Willie van Peer, either as editors, collaborators, supervisees, or admirers of his work. We also invited budding researchers, who owe much to Willie van Peer's teaching and inspiration in all the courses he has taught around the world and who find an opportunity here to publish their work with seasoned scholars. By doing this, we believe we follow one of Willie's leading mottos: stimulate students to actively and fearlessly carry out research independently on an international level from an early stage in their studies onwards, with the possible prospect of becoming researchers within and beyond today's academia.

The aims of this volume are twofold: we present a multidisciplinary approach to the field of empirical studies of literature by bringing together perspectives from a wide range of areas, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, linguistics and

literature, and scholars who work in different parts of the world. These papers stand as a clear demonstration of the great breadth of Willie van Peer's interests and knowledge. In addition, the budding researchers who contribute in this volume illustrate how bonds can be created between both junior and senior scholars from all continents, a principle Willie van Peer strongly holds and which can be found in the tenets underlying the REDES Project, which he co-founded in 2002 (see Zyngier, Chesnokova & Viana 2007; also see www.redes.de).

Popperian at heart, Willie van Peer's interest in empirical studies results from his inquisitive mind and challenging posture. In his seminal work, published more than twenty years ago (van Peer 1986), he concentrated his attention on exploring whether literary quality could be found in the linguistic structure of texts. This dissertation was already empirical in nature as readers' reactions were surveyed in order to validate the arguments, inspired by a speech on the new linguistic approach to analyze literary quality delivered by Geoffrey Leech.

Going beyond formal and structural approaches, Willie van Peer wanted to observe the effects of literature on readers rather than predicting it without empirical evidence. His students and colleagues still often hear him say that some concepts can only be grasped by assessing what the majority thinks. This is how he might have worded it: when it comes to interpretation or opinion of elusive concepts like "beauty", it is much more reliable to ask 30 people on the street than one solitary expert. It has been his constant concern to be as distanced as possible from theories and ideologies in order to find out what real people think and what their attitudes are. His program can probably be best described as *democratic*, and it necessarily leads towards an interdisciplinary approach at the interface between literature and psychology. Perhaps his experience in Medical School may have influenced the way he sees research: an evidence-based process, the quality of which depends much on collaboration and team-work. This perspective explains the number of his joint publications.

Next to the shift towards psychology, Willie van Peer has also insisted on the need for statistics and a quantitative approach to literary studies. Granting that each reader has individual characteristics, he holds that trends in text-reader interaction need to be observed in larger groups and that it is high time that the hypothetical models of readers should be replaced by real people, who account for what the majority actually say, think and do.

In his production, Willie van Peer has been exceptionally prolific. So far, he has published 5 books, edited or co-edited 11 volumes of articles, authored over 165 articles and 30 reviews (see http://www.daf.uni-muenchen.de/personen/professoren/van_peer/index.html). The range of his academic interests comprehends narrative studies (van Peer & Chatman 2001), the role of the literary canon in education (van Peer & Soetaert 1993), and the quality of literary texts

(van Peer 2008). His publications, which are all interdisciplinary in nature, have greatly impacted a variety of fields, including stylistics, text linguistics, thematics, narratology. He has delivered over 200 talks to international audiences in 27 countries, which have inspired dozens of young and already mature researchers to bravely take a similar scholarly path. And more of his works are on the way.

In fact, Willie van Peer had already developed many of his concepts by the time the International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature (ESL or IGEL – *Internationale Gesellschaft für Empirische Literaturwissenschaft*) was founded, providing him with “a broad highway to unite systematically all appropriate metatheoretical, empirical, philosophical, historical, linguistic, sociological and psychological researches, in order to present a modern multidisciplinary approach” (Halász 1995: 11). It was actually with Siegfried Schmidt at the helm that sociologists, psychologists and literary scholars founded the IGEL in 1987. As Schmidt confessed at the Round Table held during the tenth biennial IGEL conference in Munich in 2006, the label had been coined for political purposes and he himself never intended the Association to actually take an empirical turn. However, the statement that the Society aimed at promoting empirical research both by junior and senior scholars (see www.igelweb.org) was taken literally by scholars such as Willie van Peer, who played a major role in promoting cooperation and personal contact in all areas supported by IGEL. As a founding member, member of the executive committee and former President of IGEL, he has been able to contribute both on an individual and an institutional level to empirical studies.

By empirical, and very much in the light of our epigraph, we mean “a kind of reasoning and a kind of research that is based on real evidence, that is, on evidence from the real world, which can be inspected by anyone ... one that bridges the gap between the Humanities and the Natural Sciences, in the realization that both need each other for a better understanding of the world” (van Peer et al. 2007: 7). And there are many systematic ways of conducting this kind of research. Some of them are questioning, observing, experimenting. Many of the chapters in this book illustrate different ways of being empirical.

The present volume focuses on how this approach to Literature and other cultural artifacts builds bridges between different areas. It consists of four sections, each focusing on a different aspect of ELS development and application. The articles in the first section, “Theoretical and Philosophical Perspectives”, provide different ways of understanding what empirical means and what it entails. Section II, “Psychology, Foregrounding and Literature”, represents the interface in which Willie has contributed most in his attempt to define foregrounding. Part III, “Computers and the Humanities”, illustrates how new technology has impacted the understanding of literary texts and how computational linguistics can work to illuminate readers and their experience with verbal art. Section IV collects works

by young researchers who have participated in the REDES Project Willie van Peer has been supporting for so many years now and who unarguably can be called The New Generation. Each of these sections offer an Introduction which will help the reader see the links between the chapters. The book closes with an Afterword, a tribute to Willie van Peer by one of his many distinguished colleagues.

Here, then, we present the state of the art in empirical studies of literature. Much of this could not have been obtained were it not for the efforts of Willie van Peer, whose academic generosity, relentless search for knowledge, and provocative posture have helped make history.

Sonia Zyngier
 Marisa Bortolussi
 Anna Chesnokova
 Jan Auracher
 January 2008

References

- Halasz, L. 2002. Freudian text as a challenge for empirical study of literature. *IGEL 2002. Proceedings. Papers from the 8th conference held at Pécs, Hungary, August 21–24.*
- Louwerse, M. & van Peer, W. (eds) 2002. *Thematics. Interdisciplinary Studies.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Popper, K.R. 1959/1980. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery.* London: Unwin Hyman.
- Van Peer, W. 1986. *Stylistics and Psychology: Investigations of Foregrounding.* London: Croom Helm.
- Van Peer, W. & Soetaert, R. (eds). 1993. *The Position of the Literary Canon in Education.* The Hague: Bibliographia Neerlandica.
- Van Peer, W. & Chatman, S. (eds). 2001. *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective.* Albany NY: SUNY Press.
- Van Peer, W., Hakemulder, J. & Zyngier, S. 2007. *Muses and Measures: Empirical Research Methods for the Humanities.* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Van Peer, W. (ed.). 2008. In press. *The Quality of Literature. Linguistic Studies in the Evaluation of Literary Texts.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Zyngier, S., Chesnokova, A. & Viana, V. 2007. *Acting and Connecting: Cultural Approaches to Language and Literature.* Munich: LIT Verlag.

Table of contents

Introduction	ix
--------------	----

Part I

Theoretical and Philosophical Perspectives

Section editor: *Paul Sopčák*

1. Studying literature and being empirical: A multifaceted conjunction <i>Uri Margolin</i>	7
2. Empirical research into the processing of free indirect discourse and the imperative of ecological validity <i>Geoff Hall</i>	21
3. Notes towards a new philology <i>Donald C. Freeman</i>	35
4. A theory of expressive reading <i>Don Kuiken</i>	49

Part II

Psychology, Foregrounding and Literature

Section editor: *Olivia Fialho*

5. Textual and extra-textual manipulations in the empirical study of literary response <i>Peter Dixon & Marisa Bortolussi</i>	75
6. Foregrounding and feeling in response to narrative <i>David S. Miall</i>	89
7. Two levels of foregrounding in literary narratives <i>Yeshayahu Shen</i>	103
8. Narrative empathy and inter-group relations <i>János László & Ildikó Smogyvári</i>	113

9.	Effects of reading on knowledge, social abilities, and selfhood: Theory and empirical studies	127
	<i>Raymond Mar, Maja Djikic & Keith Oatley</i>	
10.	Imagining what could happen: Effects of taking the role of a character on social cognition	139
	<i>Jemèljan Hakemulder</i>	

Part III

Computers and the Humanities

Section editor: *Vander Viana*

11.	An automated text analysis: Willie Van Peer's academic contributions	161
	<i>Arthur C. Graesser & Brent Morgan</i>	
12.	Computationally discriminating literary from non-literary texts	175
	<i>Max Louwerse, Nick Benesh & Bin Zhang</i>	
13.	Metaphors and software-assisted cognitive stylistics	193
	<i>Michael Kimmel</i>	
14.	Searching for style in Modern American Poetry	211
	<i>David L. Hoover</i>	
15.	The laws governing the history of poetry	229
	<i>Colin Martindale</i>	
16.	Consolidating empirical method in data-assisted stylistics: Towards a corpus-attested glossary of literary terms	243
	<i>Bill Louw</i>	

Part IV

REDES Project: The new generation

Section editor: *Milena Mendes*

17.	Empirical evaluation: Towards an automated index of lexical variety	271
	<i>Vander Viana, Natalia Silveira & Sonia Zyngier</i>	

18.	Language allergy: Myth or reality? <i>Mariya Sergeyeva & Anna Chesnokova</i>	283
19.	Proper names in the translation of <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> <i>Vladimir Yepishev</i>	297
20.	Threat and geographical distance: The case of North Korea <i>Jan Prasil, Maria Dudusova & Jan Auracher</i>	309
21.	The apology of popular fiction: Everyday uses of literature in Poland <i>Maciej Maryl</i>	317
	A matter of versifying: Tradition, innovation and the sonnet form in English <i>Walter Nash</i>	329
	About the contributors	343
	Index of authors	351
	Index of keywords	355

PART I

Theoretical and Philosophical Perspectives

Theoretical and philosophical perspectives

Introduction

Despite the fact that Willie van Peer has been an unparalleled ambassador for the empirical study of literature (ESL), the field still needs to clarify its position among its participating disciplines. Regarding sociology, psychology or philosophy, this situation should not seem surprising, since in these disciplines literature and the arts in general are one among many objects of investigation. The uncertain relationship within literary departments, however, weighs more heavily on ESL and raises the question of how fully it can be integrated with traditional literary studies.

The uncertain position of ESL may partly be due to the multi-disciplinarity and multi-nationality of the enterprise and the ensuing quandary of conflicting epistemologies *within* ESL. Gerard Steen (2003) has described these tensions and their history as involving three competing “paradigms:” a) the focus on the philosophical and (meta-) theoretical groundwork of ESL by the social constructivist group around Siegfried J. Schmidt at Siegen University; b) the focus on methodology by Norbert Groeben and colleagues; and c) the applied research of a group of mostly North American psychologists (e.g., Art Graesser in this volume). Despite the fact that the latter grouping has of late most strongly shaped ESL internationally, the tension remains and continues to complicate the relations between ESL and its ‘sister’ disciplines. The papers in this section address these issues in different ways.

In the first paper of this section, Uri Margolin proposes a model of ESL in which not only these three pillars of ESL, but also historical, institutional, and purely conceptual approaches to the study of literature (e.g., linguistics, narratology, etc.), all function as necessary, mutually dependent, and complementary rather than competing discourses within a comprehensive empirical study of literature. On the basis of Mario Bunge’s (1998) philosophy of science and Siegfried Schmidt’s (1980) systems theoretical model of literary communication, he lays a solid epistemological foundation for ESL. The strength of Margolin’s contribution lies not only in providing a framework within which each of the current approaches to ESL find their place as interacting components (he posits a network where others have focused on divergence), but also in *integrating* ESL within the larger structure of literary studies *per se*. This is a timely and welcome paper.

Assuming a challenging position, Geoff Hall’s chapter underlines Margolin’s rejection of ESL as limited to experimental approaches. Hall argues that all too often experimental approaches to studying certain aspects of literary reading are

reductive to the extent that they fail to make important distinctions and provide only trivial insights. To illustrate his point, he draws on two of the most influential recent empirical studies of free indirect discourse, which he considers exemplary of the complexity of literary reading. According to Hall, a greater emphasis on ethnographic and qualitative studies is called for to do justice to the complexity of literary reading and to ensure that the criteria for ecological validity are met.

In the third chapter of this section, Don Freeman appeals for a return to “*rational* projects: inter-subjective, explicit, consistent, open to challenge” (Margolin, this volume) in the aftermath of what he considers the damage that poststructuralist “theory” has done not only to literary studies, but also to the Humanities in general. He proposes a “New Philology”, which, like Margolin’s proposal, encompasses both the purely conceptual study of literature as semiotic objects and empirical approaches. As illustration, Freeman applies the theory of cognitive metaphor to a passage from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

Don Kuiken’s contribution in some way touches on each of the preceding three chapters and also already sets the stage for the following section on psychology and literature. Peter Zima’s (1999) assessment of Adorno’s aesthetic theory comes very near to the approach Kuiken takes: “[I]t will systematically oscillate between Kant’s refusal to conceptualise art and Hegel’s claim that a conceptual definition is possible” (191). Whereas, Margolin, Hall, and Freeman adopt a conceptualizing approach to literature and literary reading, Kuiken, without accepting the poststructuralist rejection of subjectivity, shares its concern for the temporality and “fragility of felt meanings” (Kuiken, this volume). He draws on continental and analytic aesthetics, phenomenology, and in particular Gendlin’s (1962/1997) discussion of expression in order to develop a theory of reading as expressive disclosure. Kuiken’s proposal paves the way for forms of empirical investigation that provide access to reading moments during which “freshly felt meanings” are articulated, as well as to reading moments that reinforce poststructuralist claims about the unsayable (Budick and Iser 1989). He presents aspects of a number of his empirical studies to support his notion that in literary reading expression and disclosure are cotemporal.

Each of these chapters, then, contributes in its own way to some of the theoretical and philosophical discussions that concern the dynamics within ESL as well as its place in literary studies. By addressing aspects ranging from meta-theory to minute discriminations in “felt meanings”, and, most importantly, by demonstrating the “organic” structure that philosophy, theory, and applied research share, the following four chapters create a meaningful background against which the volume as a whole unfolds.

Paul Sopčák
Section Editor

References

- Budick, S. and Iser, W. (eds) 1989. *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*. New York NY: Columbia University Press.
- Bunge, M. 1998. *Philosophy of Science*. New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Gendlin, E.T. 1962/1997. *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning. A Philosophical and Psychological Approach to the Subjective*. Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Schmidt, S.J. 1980. *Grundriss der empirischen Literaturwissenschaft*. Braunschweig: Vieweg.
- Steen, G. 2003. A historical view of empirical poetics: Trends and possibilities. *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 21: 51–67.
- Zima, P.V. 1999. *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*. London: Athlone Press.

CHAPTER 1

Studying literature and being empirical

A multifaceted conjunction

Uri Margolin

I begin with a distinction between rational, empirical and experimentally based types of theoretical claims or discourses. I go on to discuss the study of literary dynamics (or literary historiography) as a field of empirical activity involving the relations and correlations between texts and text models on the one hand and the contexts in which they occur on the other. This is illustrated with respect to literary production, mediation, initial reception and post-processing over time (Siegfried Schmidt's four components of literary communication). I conclude with a list of theoretical and methodological tasks for current experimental as well as empirical studies of literature.

Keywords: literary theory, methodology, empirical study of literature, literary historiography, experimental studies, literary dynamics

1. Literary object and theory: The dual conceptual/empirical nature of each

The total literary system consists of two equally indispensable and mutually irreducible components: literature as a set of given semiotic objects and codes (text types, genres, styles) and literature as the correlated set of historically occurring individual and collective situations, activities and practices bearing on these objects and codes. The scholarly study and theorizing about literature as pure semiotic objects and codes and in a purely *conceptual* way (linguistics, semiotics, possible worlds theories, narratological models and theories, etc.) is a rational and inter-subjective kind of discursive activity, which produces both theoretical and descriptive poetics. Being rational and systematic, it cannot be faulted as such. But its validity and validation alike remain within the purely conceptual, as in philosophy, while the concepts and distinctions it employs may exist only within the scholarly or professional discourse system. Studying just the verbal objects