

Summaries

Introduction: Story and reality - Sjaak van der Geest

The introduction sketches the rapprochement between social science and literature. Sociologists and anthropologists tend to lose interest in the natural science ideal of strict objectivity and attempt to present their research theme in the context of a human "story". This literary turn in social science brings into focus common methodological assumptions of linguistics and the study of literature on the one hand and the study of culture and society on the other.

Story and reality: a text-sociological perspective - Peter V. Zima

The author examines the possibility of a synthesis between sociology and semiotics. On the one hand this project entails the conception of certain linguistic processes (lexical, semantic and narrative) as articulations of social interests: it is at the semantic level of *relevance* and *classification* that group interests penetrate into discourse. On the other hand, it entails the definition of such sociological concepts as collective consciousness and ideology in a semiotic context: the consciousness of a group is expressed in the latter's *sociolect* and the ideologies which interact in literary texts are discourses which have an impact on the narrative structures of a novel or a short story. Towards the end of his article the author illustrates his approach in three model analyses of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Camus' *The Outsider* and Jürgen Becker's *Umgebungen*.

The reality of the story. Towards an anthropology of story-telling -

W. van Peer

The present paper deals with the question *why* stories exist and why people tell them and listen to them. Point of departure is the distinction between stories in so far as they are *about* (some kind of) reality and the way they take themselves *in* reality. The structural and linguistic qualities of stories allow them to fulfill a very general function, i.e. that of transferring knowledge and values concerning human experience. In this sense, stories may be characterized as quasi-universal anthropological artefacts. As far as *literary* stories are concerned, a more specific function is proposed. Central to this function is the way in which it enhances the experience of deliverance. The *Tales of Thousand and One Nights* exemplifies this function within its structure and content most clearly.

Methodological problems with respect to the application of this insight to other (types of) narrative texts are discussed. It emerges that the distinction between the reality the story is *about* and the reality the story-telling takes place *in*, is of crucial importance in this respect. Deliverance is thus not necessarily present in the thematic material of the story. However, within the activity of telling the story *in* reality, some kind of deliverance - from the catastrophes depicted in the story's content - is experienced by the listener/reader. This experiential aspect is a constant in the way stories operate functionally in reality.

Brothers and sisters. About family-relations in fairy tales. A historical-sociological approach -

Lily E. Clerkx

Scientific interpretations of the contents of european fairy tales are numerous and contradictory. The author postulates that these interpretations are often no more than speculations. This can be explained by the great gap in time between our culture and the culture from which fairy tales stem.

She presents and demonstrates a historical-sociological

method of interpretation, in which the contents of fairy tales are seen as a continuation of the experiences, anxieties and wishes of the tellers of and listeners to popular stories in a pre-modern society. Persons and events in stories do not need to be interpreted only symbolically as parts of the personality and as psychological processes, as Bruno Bettelheim asserts. They can be made very understandable when taken at their face value and placed in their cultural context. The author studied all types of western-european fairy tales which deal with family relations, with the purpose to find out if they can be related to family relations in real life, such as known by the research in family history.

As an example the relations between brother and brother, sister and sister, brother and sister and between step-siblings are exhaustively presented, analysed and explained by comparing them with the facts of family structures as presented by family history. The correspondence is striking. Competition and solidarity between siblings in fairy tales can be explained by structural problems arising from the kind of subsistence, hereditary succession, marriage rules, dowry questions and step-relations. Besides, fairy tales can produce surplus information about the feelings of hate and love arising from structural problems in family life and about wishes to overcome these problems.

Realism and the novel in Africa - Mineke Schipper

In different times and cultures, "reality" is experienced in different ways. Reality and knowledge about it are socially determined and therefore relative. How and to what degree then does the writer succeed in making us believe that literature "copies" reality?

After a theoretical introduction, the realism of the Senegalese novelist Sembène Ousmane - his realistic intentions, themes and techniques are analyzed with examples from his novel *Gods Bits of Wood*.

The literary turn in contemporary anthropology -
Bob Scholte

"The literary turn in contemporary anthropology" is a review of *Writing Culture*. What this literary turn entails is illustrated by a brief discussion of the articles in the Marcus & Clifford volume. The review also seeks to place this development in its proper intellectual-historical context and several critical questions are raised, most notably pertaining to the issues of social critique and political praxis.