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## Literary semantics and literary pragmatics – (in)separable disciplines?

### Summary

The article takes up the issue of an overlap between two subfields of semantics and pragmatics that deal with literary (especially fictional) texts. The author refers her discussion to a more general question of the separation of the domain and function of formal semantics and pragmatics, which goes back to Ch. Morris, R. Carnap and the American school of modal logicians (in particular R. Montague, D. Lewis, R.C. Stalnaker). She also briefly mentions the discussion between the views of semantic minimalists (E. Borg, H. Kamp) and the contextualists (J.R. Searle, S. Levin, D. Sperber, D. Wilson) on this subject as well as more cognitively-oriented approaches. As far as literary pragmatics is concerned, it is hard not to appreciate the contribution of the phenomenological, hermeneutical and semiotic theorizing (R. Ingarden, W. Iser, P. Ricœur, U. Eco).

The author then discusses the contributions of formal semantic-pragmatic theories to literary semantics and pragmatics: 1) the theory of *possible worlds/text worlds* of L. Doležel, N. E. Enkvist and M.-L. Ryan, and in the cognitive framework of P. Werth, P. Stockwell and J. Gavins; 2) *Game-Theoretical Semantics* of J. Hintikka with the concept of *dialogic games* of L. Carlson; 3) issues of *figuration* (L.J. Cohen and A. Margalit, M. Cresswell, S. Levinson, the Relevance theorists). Finally, the author points to those formal approaches that seem promising for the future studies of discourse and literary texts: *Dynamic Semantics* (esp. *Discourse Representation Theory* of H. Kamp and U. Reyle and *Default Semantics* of K. Jaszczolt), as well as less formal contextualist proposals (M. Toolan, A. Kiklewicz) and the neurobiological research on discourse and affectivity (J. Feldman, A. Damasio, respectively).

**Key words:** literary/fictional texts, possible-worlds semantics, Text World Theory, inner and outer context, semantic and pragmatic games, *intentio auctoris-intentio operis-intentio lectoris*, figuration

## Streszczenie

Artykuł podejmuje temat zachodzenia na siebie dwóch pól badawczych – semantyki i pragmatyki literackiej (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem języka fikcji). Autorka odnosi swe rozważania do bardziej ogólnego problemu ewentualnego oddzielenia od siebie domen funkcjonalnych semantyki i pragmatyki formalnej. Początki tej dyskusji wywodzą się z myśli teoretycznej Ch. Morrisa, R. Carnapa oraz amerykańskiej szkoły logików modalnych (zwłaszcza R. Montague, D. Lewisa i R.C. Stalnackera). Autorka wspomina krótko spór na tenże temat pomiędzy zwolennikami minimalizmu semantycznego (E. Borg, H. Kamp) a kontekstualistami (J.R. Searle, S. Levin, D. Sperber, D. Wilson), jak również podejścia zorientowane bardziej kognitywnie. W obrębie pragmatyki literackiej bezcenny pozostaje wkład myśli fenomenologicznej, hermeneutycznej i semiotycznej (R. Ingarden, W. Iser, P. Ricoeur, U. Eco).

W dalszej części autorka wymienia wkład formalnych ujęć semantyczno-pragmatycznych do rozwoju semantyki i pragmatyki literackiej: 1) *teorie światów możliwych/światów tekstu* (L. Doležel, N.E. Enkvist, M.-L. Ryan, a w paradygmacie kognitywnej Teoria Świata Tekstu – P. Werth, P. Stockwell, J. Gavins); 2) *semantykę teorio-grową* J. Hintikka wraz z pojęciem *gier dialogowych* L. Carlsona); 3) problem *figuracji* (L. J. Cohen i A. Margalit, M. Cresswell, S. Levinson, teoretycy Teorii Relewanacji). Wreszcie autorka wskazuje na te podejścia formalne, które wydają się obiecujące dla przyszłych studiów nad dyskursem i tekstami literackimi: *Semantykę Dynamiczną* (zwłaszcza *Teorię Reprezentacji Dyskursu* H. Kampa i U. Reyle’a oraz *semantykę znaczeń domyślnych* K. Jaszczółt), jak również mniej formalne propozycje kontekstualne (M. Toolan, A. Kiklewicz) oraz badania neurobiologiczne nad dyskursem (J. Feldman) i afektywnością (A. Damasio).

**Słowa kluczowe:** teksty literackie/fikcyjne, semantyka światów możliwych, Teoria Świata Tekstu, kontekst wewnętrzny i zewnętrzny, gry semantyczne i pragmatyczne, *intentio auctoris-intentio operis-intentio lectoris*, figuracja

## 1. Introduction

Ever since the term *sémantique* was officially introduced into linguistics by Michel Bréal in 1897 and since the closely related term *pragmatics* appeared in 1938, in Charles Morris's partitioning of the field of semiotics into syntactics, semantics and pragmatics, the philosophical and linguistic literature have witnessed an ongoing and largely inconclusive debate on the possibility of drawing the demarcation line between the last two disciplines.

The aim of my article is to raise, by extension, the query whether the separation of *literary semantics* and its younger sister *literary pragmatics* is a feasible and reasonable project at all. More specifically, I want to refer my discussion exclusively to the considerations of the semantics-pragmatics divide voiced in the formal paradigm (and discussed, for instance, by Borg 2004, 2007 or Stalmaszczyk 2008). Consequently, I will not have recourse to pro and con arguments coming from less formalized and more descriptively-oriented views on the scope of semantics and pragmatics of natural languages.

My second purpose is to ask a rarely formulated question about possible applications of formal descriptions to literary discourse, and in particular – fictional texts. I realize that several researchers, and especially literary theorists, might scoff at even the idea of subjecting artistic texts to a formalized description, yet – since several such attempts have been made over the last decades – the issue seems worthy of at least a summary discussion. In what follows I refer mostly to the Anglo-American research on this topic<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Literary semantics and literary pragmatics as bridge disciplines

In Ruth Kempson's opening to *Semantic Theory* (1977: 1, quoted also in Stalmaszczyk 2008: 11), semantics is very aptly described as a discipline bridging the gap between linguistics and philosophy. In this light, literary semantics appears as no less bridge-like. As a sub-discipline, it has a long tradition extending back to Charles Bally's treatise on stylistics of 1909 and Ivor A. Richards's (1936) ponderings on the rhetorical and figurative potential of human language, culminating in the more recent foundational works of, notably, Lubomir Doležel, Nils Erik Enkvist, Trevor Eaton (with the summary of his work published in 2010), Michael Toolan, Geoffrey Leech, Mick Short, Elena Semino, as well as Paul Werth, Margaret H. Freeman and Peter Stockwell in the strictly cognitive paradigm. For several decades it has provided a fruitful interface for general semantics, discourse studies, linguistic and literary stylistics, poetics, rhetoric, narratology and theory of literature. In turn, literary pragmatics owes its birth and steady development largely but not exclusively to the writings of phenomenologists (cf. Roman Ingarden's notion of *concretization*, 1931/1973, or Wolfgang Iser's concept of *actualization*, 1978), the hermeneutic considerations of Paul Ricoeur (1976, 1981) and the corpus of studies in artistic semiotics by Umberto Eco (e. g. [1979] 1994, 1990), in all of which the person of the reader/interpreter is the focal point. This is a branch of study no less interdisciplinary in nature since in its contemporary shape it draws, apart from philosophy, from such cognate disciplines as linguistic pragmatics, cognitive studies and empirically-oriented reader-response theories (called also *the theory of reception* by Iser).

Literary semantics and pragmatics are also complementary to each other: while semantics analyses the meaning and stylistic form of an artistic text (thus basically the *intentio operis*), pragmatics concentrates on the *intentio lectoris*, always contextualized. The *intentio auctoris*, which is perceived as one of the most controversial issues in modern literary criticism (cf. Gibbs 2005), should – theoretically – belong to the 'pragmatics-box' as the realization of the poetic 'I'. However,

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<sup>1</sup> I refer the readers for more details as to the formal semantics-pragmatics divide to Piotr Stalmaszczyk's (2008) informative article. I have selected those issues from his discussion that bear on the analysis of literary, especially fictional discourse.

Eco (1983: 78) suggests that the authorial presence should be concealed behind or within the text proper by claiming that the “author should die ... [so] as not to trouble the path of the text”.

So can the semantics-pragmatics distinction be maintained between the two specialized subfields mentioned above? A lot will hinge on the adopted descriptions of their nature and functions.

### 3. Formal specifications of the scope of linguistic semantics and pragmatics

The above-mentioned triple subdivision of the field of semiotics drawn by Morris (apparently, following some ideas of Charles S. Peirce) ascribed to *semantics* the analysis of the relations between elements of the semiotic (linguistic) system and their designata (generally speaking, the phenomenon of ‘hooking’ language onto the world) while to pragmatics the focus on the relations between signs and their interpreters (Morris 1938: 6, quoted in Levinson [1983] 2010: 1–2). The term *interpreter*, which suggests a one-sided view of the participants in the communicative act, is worth noting as not all definitions of pragmatics will converge on this point.

In fact, Rudolf Carnap in his seminal work *Introduction to Semantics* ([1942] 1948: 8) reformulates slightly Morris’s description claiming that:

In an application of language, we may distinguish three chief factors: the speaker, the expression uttered, and the designatum of the expression [...].  
[...] An investigation of a language belongs to *pragmatics* if explicit reference to a speaker is made, it belongs to *semantics* if designata but not speakers are referred to, it belongs to syntax if neither speakers nor designata but only expressions are dealt with.

This time, it is the person of the speaker (author) that has become prominent, at the expense of the hearer (interpreter). However, one page later, Carnap – very rightly – generalizes this definition: “If in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or, to put it in more general terms, to the user of a language, then we assign it to the field of pragmatics (Carnap 1948: 9). The *user* can, for sure, be understood now as an umbrella term for both the speaker and the receiver. Interestingly, Carnap refers back to Morris again, stating that: “There is a slight difference in the use of the term ‘pragmatics’ which is defined by Morris as the field dealing with the relations between speakers (or certain processes in them) and expressions” (Carnap 1948: 9). This can indicate that Morris, initially, used the term *speaker* to cover both parties engaged in the communicative exchange. The somewhat enigmatic “processes [occurring] in [speakers]” might be related to Carnap’s (1948: 10) inclusion within pragmatic investigations of the physiological, psychological, socio- and ethnological aspects of the human communicative behaviour.

At this point Stalmaszczyk (2008) invokes the tradition of the Polish Lvov–Warsaw school of logicians and philosophers (of language as well), within which Tadeusz Kotarbiński ([1947] 1986: 373), in his reformulation of Morris’s and Carnap’s definitions, describes pragmatics as concerned with language as an “expression of a speaking subject” (transl. EC-K). This focusing on the person of the speaker goes even deeper in Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz’s ([1953] 1985: 167) definition of pragmatics, the discipline that “treats about relationships between speaking and thinking” (transl. EC-K, quoted also in Stalmaszczyk 2008: 18, who labels this kind of pragmatics as ‘mental’). I have devoted so much attention to those details for the issue is not merely terminological but largely connected with the *intentionality* of an act of communication, be it spoken or written. Intentionality lies at the core of modern pragmatic debates (viz. the illocutionary aspect of speech acts in the eyes of John L. Austin or John R. Searle, as well as H. Paul Grice’s Principle of Cooperation and the ensuing Conversational Maxims) but has as well been a pervasive and unsolved issue in literary theorizing (cf. Gibbs 2005).

The Carnapian project for *pure semantics* has set the dominant framework for formal semantics, whose fields of interest are: 1) a recursive specification of semantic values of complex expressions on the basis of the meanings of their components and the mode of their combination, i. e. the syntactic form (the idea of the *compositionality of meaning* attributed to Gottlob Frege), 2) the specification of *truth-conditions* for a given sentence/proposition, within a model (following largely Alfred Tarski’s ideas) and 3) this part of the general process of inference that is based on *logical deduction* and the formulation of logically valid arguments (with the relation of *entailment*, viz. logical necessitation, being accorded a prominent place). The *referential relations* between the language and the world, though not mentioned explicitly, are partitioned between 1) and 2) above.

The programme for formal semantics as outlined by Frege, Carnap and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein achieved its fullness in the so-called Montague Grammar (cf. Thomason 1974). The intensional system of Richard Montague, developed within the American milieu of analytical philosophers and modal logicians, was enriched by the axiomatic addition to its model of very useful constructs called *possible worlds*, worked out by Carnap, Stig Kanger, Saul Kripke, Jaakko Hintikka, David Lewis and Nicholas Rescher, among others (cf. Partee 1989). In consequence, Montague semantics is rigidly compositional (and based on categorical syntax), truth-conditional across an infinite set of possible worlds (*pw*’s) and deductively-oriented.

Yet, Montague became soon aware of the fact that the division between semantics and pragmatics would be difficult to maintain, mainly due to the presence in natural languages of *indexical expressions* (so-called by Peirce; prototypically deictics, demonstratives and tense markers), the meaning of which cannot be settled outside a specific *context of use*. Hence Montague’s new definition of pragmatics as the branch of semiotics studying “relations among expressions, the objects and the users or contexts of use of the expressions” (Montague [1968] 1974: 95). Con-

sequently, the assignment of purely semantic *senses* (*intensions*) for context-independent expressions has to take place in a model symbolized as *I* (*index*), which pairs possible worlds and times ( $W \times T$ ). For context-sensitive expressions, in turn, the model for the assignment of mixed semantic-pragmatic *meanings* is captured through an index  $I \times J$ , where *J* stands for a set of contextual factors. Thus, what emerges is a truth-conditional pragmatics, where the assignment of truth-values becomes relativized not only to a possible world or worlds but also to a specific context. An even fuller elaboration of an index as an *n*-tuple of *contextual coordinates* comes from Lewis ([1970] 1972: 175–176). A possible-world coordinate is treated axiomatically, hence as lying outside the context proper, whereas strictly contextual factors include: 1) time, 2) place, 3) speaker, 4) audience, 5) indicated object(s), 6) previous discourse, 7) assignment of values to variables and 8) prominent (focal) objects. Coordinate 6), that is *previous discourse* (better referred to as *surrounding discourse*), is the only intra-linguistic factor in this set.

In view of the impossibility of keeping semantics completely independent of pragmatic considerations<sup>2</sup> Montague decided to superpose pragmatics onto semantics ('cumulative pragmatics' in Stalmaszczyk's wording, 2008: 14). This move, very significant for our discussion, was emphasized by Richard Thomason (1974: 64), in his Introduction to Montague's writings:

The close similarity of pragmatic and semantic theory raises the question of whether they are separate subjects at all. It seems natural to view pragmatics as a generalization of semantics [...]<sup>3</sup>.

Yet, we should be ready to consider an opposing stance suggested by Max Cresswell, who analyses an anonymous poem (1) that contains two indexicals (the deictic 'I' and the demonstrative pronoun 'this'):

- (1) I am Master of this College,  
What I don't know isn't knowledge.

He comments on it as follows:

[T]he meaning of (1) can be thought of as a function from a complex bundle of all the relevant 'contextual information' to a proposition. That is why Richard Montague has called the formal analysis of context dependence 'pragmatics', though it is equally arguable that since we are analysing the *meaning* of (1) it should still be regarded as semantics. (Cresswell 1973: 109–110)

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<sup>2</sup> Such a rigid project has been advocated (against the overwhelming camp of contextualists) by *Minimal Semantics*, whose defenders are Emma Borg (2004, 2007) as well as Herman Cappelen and Ernie Lepore in *Insensitive Semantics* (2005).

<sup>3</sup> Such a theoretical decision is already hinted at by Carnap (1948: 13), where he refers to descriptive semantics and syntax as parts of pragmatics.



These two opposing opinions point to the lack of an objective procedure for tracing the demarcation line between semantics and pragmatics of natural languages and raise the question about the need thereof.

The subsequent dynamic development of linguistic pragmatics has roughly outlined the range of its interests as directed towards: 1) the phenomena of *occasionality* (cf. Levinson [1983] 2010, mainly deixis), 2) *speech acts*, 3) *pragmatic presuppositions*, much looser than the truth-related semantic presuppositions and concerned more with appropriateness and what Robert C. Stalnaker ([1970] 1972: 383) calls a 'propositional attitude' in a given context, and last but not least 4) *pragmatic inference*, which is less strict than logical deduction and concerned mostly with the decoding of hidden, secondary meanings (speaker-meanings), typically the Gricean implicata generated in the process of *implicature*.

#### 4. The characterization of context

A very concise description of context (about which, its definitions and taxonomies a separate book could easily be written) is that coming from Aleksander Kiklewicz (2011: 83, transl. EC-K): "In the most general terms, context is the surroundings of a [linguistic] unit, the linguistic or extra-linguistic environment in which it functions". This definition, like Montague's or Lewis's index comprises both the intra-linguistic neighbourhood<sup>4</sup> and the extra-linguistic *context of situation* (the term originating in Bronisław Malinowski's ethnographic research).

The formal definition of context propounded by Montague and Lewis (cf. other definitions within the similar logically oriented paradigms discussed by Stalmaszczyk 2008, among others that of Stalnaker or David Kaplan) are all abstractions over a situation in real life, a selection of its most relevant aspects. Apart from the addresser and addressee, they leave place for the third party, that is persons not actively present in the communicative situation as well as the unintended addressees such as overhearers or eavesdroppers (cf. Cappelen 2007: 18). In turn, the inclusion of an unlimited set of possible worlds in those models have made them of utmost importance and utility for the specification of semantic notions such as denotation or truth-valuation for fictional sentences/propositions, which do not refer to the actual world (*aw*) at all or mix actuality with possibility.

A different approach to context has come from the circles that base their research on cognitive and psychological studies. Both the *relevance theorists* (cf. Sperber and Wilson [1986, 1995] 2011) and linguists of the *cognitive denomination* have opted for the understanding of context in terms of a conceptual and/or psychological construct seen as a set of premises utilized in the process of interpretation, often including a subset of our encyclopaedic knowledge of the

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<sup>4</sup> A description of the entire human language in terms of a series of embedded contexts, each corresponding to a different level of linguistic analysis, was provided by John R. Firth already in the 1930s.

world<sup>5</sup> (cf. also the mentalist slant of the definitions of pragmatics by Kotarbiński and Ajdukiewicz mentioned in Section 3).

A broad characterization of context appears in Katarzyna Jaszczołt's *Default-Semantics* (to which I return briefly in Section 7, cf. Jaszczołt 2006: 131) and comprises – in line with contemporary approaches to discourse practised within sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics and cultural studies – certain aspects related to the sociological, ideological or cultural dimensions of linguistic exchanges (this was, actually, signalled already by Carnap, cf. Section 3).

In turn, *the third generation cognitive studies* (to use Freeman's label) that have been evolving over the last decade, put emphasis on highly individual, often very emotional and subjective ways of interpreting various texts and discourses. This type of contextual information seems to be the least tangible and the most difficult to capture in objective description. Yet, the neurological research of Antonio Damasio ([2003] 2011) that has shed considerable light on the inseparability of reason and affection, distinguishes between the apparently measurable and generalized *emotions* and the non-measurable particularized *feelings*. This opens some prospects for a legitimate incorporation of the affective factors in the specification of context in future research, of utmost importance for the studies of artistic discourses and their reception.

## 5. Formal semantic and pragmatic approaches vs. literary discourse

The outstanding feature of all formal systems has been their almost exclusive concentration on isolated sentences/propositions or – at best – on pairs of expressions, often of a mini-dialogue type (question-answer), or short sequences of two, three sentences, frequently to show the operation of large-scope extra-sentential phenomena (anaphora, long-range quantifier binding or extended functions of modal operators). Longer texts have practically fallen outside the scope of formal analyses and artistic texts have been left out of consideration in the face of several difficulties posed by such discourse, often classified as semantically and pragmatically deviant.

It would be unfair, however, not to point to some practitioners of certain formal theories who have made serious attempts to apply at least a selected formal apparatus to literary texts. Undoubtedly, the most successful enterprise over the last half-century has been the application and adaptation of *possible-worlds semantics* to the description of fictional prose. The pioneering work is due, among others, to Doležel, who at first implemented some elements of modal logic to the classification of narratives (thus proposing alethic, deontic, epistemic, boulomaic and

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<sup>5</sup> The inclusion within the pragmatic faculty of some encyclopaedic/background knowledge shared with other members in the acts of communication is debatable. Enkvist (1989) treats such basic knowledge of the world as semantic (cf. Section 5).



axiological narratives). From this only one step remained to be taken to join the above-mentioned types of narrative modalities to the equivalent possible worlds of fiction (cf. Doležel 1989 as a culmination of this procedure). In his later article on the incompleteness of fictional worlds, Doležel (1995) skilfully combined the Carnapian formal treatment of the incompleteness of state-descriptions with a more literature-oriented approach towards text worlds of Thomas G. Pavel (1986), and the phenomenological theory of Iser, who – as a critical follower of Ingarden – saw in the inherent gappiness of text-worlds “stimuli or propellants for the reader’s imagination” (Doležel 1995: 2)<sup>6</sup>.

Of great import proved also Enkvist’s (1989) contribution to the evolution of possible-worlds semantics into a text-world theory, better suited to the description of rich worlds of literary fiction. In line with the Ingarden-Iser or Doležel-style approach to fictional worlds, the creation and reconstruction of which is always a joint enterprise of the author and the interpreter(s), Enkvist highlighted the inextricably semantic-pragmatic nature of fictional worlds. The text (and behind it, the text-producer) represents the semantic part of the construct while its concretization by the interpreter – the pragmatic side. The following two citations emphasize the incrementally generated semantic structure of the text and its equally incrementally developing interpretation:

But as alternatives can be eliminated in different order, a text producer must order his text according to the sequence in which he wants to eliminate alternatives, and in which he wishes incrementally to specify the text world. (Enkvist 1989: 174)

Worlds are built up, and discourses comprehended and texts interpreted, through the successive increase of information through the elimination of uncertainties. (Enkvist 1989: 180)

Due to the absolutely necessary contribution of the interpreter(s) (the realization of the *intentio lectoris*, so emphatically underscored in Eco [1979] 1994, 1990), the worlds of fiction are characterized by Enkvist as strongly pragmatic in nature. What is worth noting (and possibly disputable) is the fact that he invokes the concept of *the universe of discourse* (Enkvist 1989: 176), that is general encyclopaedic knowledge of the world organized in frames, schemata and scripts, and supporting the specific interpretation, which he treats as a purely semantic model. Another richly developed application of possible-worlds semantics to the classification of narrative texts into distinct categories was forwarded by Marie-Laure Ryan (1991).

Within the paradigm of cognitive linguistics a similar project of applying modal typology to text-worlds, conceived as conceptual spaces, was initiated by

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<sup>6</sup> Doležel’s approach can be seen as entering into an interesting dialogue with the cognitively-based remarks of Ellen Spolsky (1993) on the inherent gappiness of human mental structure. The filling-in of gaps, especially in the process of literary interpretation, is perceived by her as a creative, balance-restoring process.

Paul Werth (1999). Werth's ideas have been developed and his taxonomy greatly improved by a host of text-world scholars. Under the name of *Text World Theory*, it has been successfully practised, among others, by Peter Stockwell (2002) and Joanna Gavins (2005) within the more general framework of *cognitive poetics*. They have also added the notion of *discourse world* to the original model. This is a purely pragmatic construct, a subpart of the actual world in which a specific interpretation takes place. In one of my own articles on possible worlds in fiction (Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2009) I propose to enrich the gradation: *possible world* (an austere logical formation) – *text world* (a rich fictional world) – *discourse world* (the world of an individual interpretation in which the text world is embedded) with the notion of *double context*. Thus, the *inner context* of the fictional world is text-driven (i. e. constructed on the basis of inferences that rely solely on the *intentio operis*) while the discourse world provides the *outer context*, in which the interpreter is grounded and within which the act of concretization occurs.

A different approach to discourse came from the side of *Game-Theoretical Semantics* (GTS), as represented by Hintikka and the circle of his collaborators and followers (cf. Hintikka and Kulas 1983). GTS is a truth-functional model based axiomatically on possible-worlds. It tends towards non-compositionality and the inclusion of pragmatic considerations. It is based on the *strategic paradigm* of rational decision-taking, and in particular on the model of 2-person 0-sum games (cf. Hintikka 1990 on the superiority of the strategic paradigm over the computational generative approach to natural language as advocated by Noam Chomsky). Although, theoretically, possible-worlds semantics has considerably eased the assignment of truth-values in fiction, which now occurs as relativized to specific worlds, the proposal of Lauri Carlson (1983) to apply GTS to the analysis of discourses gave up the truth-functional programme as inconsequential for fiction. His *dialogic games* can be applied to the description of 'ordinary' discourses that possess the form of a dialogue or conversation (2- or *n*-person games) but also to the analysis of narrative texts. However, in my monograph (Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2004) I argued against the artificiality of imposing a dialogical schema on e. g. descriptive texts.

On the other hand, I found the GTS programme promising enough for the study of literary texts and proposed to classify the games played on and within such works into: 1) *semantic games* (reflecting the implied author's intention as voiced via the text), 2) *pragmatic games* (played by the reader(s) and 3) their *interface*, which I called *semantic-pragmatic games*. This is yet another indication of the intertwining nature of semantics and pragmatics of discourse (literary and non-literary alike).

I realize that the placement of the author, the literary 'I', in the semantic module is the most controversial move since – according to the formal descriptions we discussed in the previous sections – the intentions of the addresser/speaker/author should, by definition, be classified as pragmatic in nature. Still, in view of a frequently hidden or unclear authorial intention, I have assumed an objectivist approach to the authorial person as expressed via the text proper.

## 6. Difficulties in applying formal apparatus to the analysis of literary texts and difficulties in separating their semantics from pragmatics

As noticed by several scholars (starting with Austin's pejorative evaluation of speech acts in literature as 'etiolations' of genuine illocutions, repeated by Searle 1975 in a slightly mitigated form), fictional texts generate all kinds of problems related to the lack of designata or impossibility of valuation in the real world. Although the acceptance of possible-worlds semantics alleviates such problems, not all literary scholars have been willing to accept this kind of semantic modelling. The status of speech acts in fiction, even at a given world, remains problematic. I think that the epithet 'parasitic' in relation to speech acts within fiction is too strong and that the modifiers 'quasi' or 'attenuated' seem more adequate. The illocutionary and perlocutionary effects of such acts have to be treated as suspended, thus becoming a pragmatic counterpart of the "willing suspension of disbelief" upon entering a fictional world.

The interpretation of a literary text greatly relies on inference mechanisms, yet the borderline between the purely semantic logical deduction (text-driven) and pragmatic inferences (and possibly implicatures) that are driven by the inner and outer context of the text world is difficult to establish. If we accept Searle's (1979) contextualist claim about the absence of the so-called *zero-context*, we are bound to agree that no autonomous semantics can ever be postulated to exist. It follows, then, that even a reconstruction of the inner context of a literary artwork always occurs in conjunction with the information flowing from the outer context (discourse world)<sup>7</sup>.

The intentionality of the text (whose varying evaluation by the successive schools of literary criticism is succinctly presented by Gibbs 2005) is theoretically unclear. The distinction between the *empirical author* (whose intentions would undoubtedly be classified as pragmatic) and the *implied (hypothetical) author* (whose intentions are close or identical with the general intention of the text qua text and thus semantic in nature) is not always easy to draw. The authorial intention may but does not have to be identical with the overall message of the text. The interpreter, unless s/he is the Ideal (Model) Reader, may not be willing or able to recover the *intentio auctoris* or even the *intentio operis* in its fullness, hence the danger of *under-* or *overinterpretation*, cf. Ricoeur 1976, 1981; Eco [1979] 1994, 1990). What is even worse (from the formal perspective), the authors themselves are also interpreters<sup>8</sup>. Translators are interpreters and 're-writers' (secondary authors). Critics,

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<sup>7</sup> The best corroboration of such a claim is provided by Jorge Luis Borges's fascinating short story in which a French author, Pierre Menard re-writes fragments of *Don Quixote* three hundred years after its creation. His text is a transcription-reconstruction identical with the original in every respect yet it acquires a completely different meaning due to its total recontextualization.

<sup>8</sup> In spite of Eco's opinion that texts are properties of readers rather than of their creators, who should beware of imposing their readings as dominant.

in turn, are inquisitive readers, not infrequently ill-disposed towards the text they feel obliged to criticize, etc.

All the above-listed qualms (as well as a considerable overlap in the games played by all these groups of persons with the text) provide an ample evidence for the inseparability of literary semantics and pragmatics.

It has been pointed out by several literary theorists, semanticists and stylisticians that every artistic text possesses a *supervalue* (*overcoding*), an additional quality over and above the cumulative effect coming from all the levels of linguistic description. Hence, its interpretation requires a holistic grasp of its form and content (thus, a literary text cannot be reduced to a mere chain of sentences, for instance). A poetically-marked text becomes closer to a visual artwork, most notably a painting, since in both of them the form and not only the content of the signs becomes a value in its own right (cf. Yuriy Lotman's opinions quoted in Kiklewicz 2011: 88). That is why the well-known literary critic Philip Wheelwright proposed a separate sub-discipline called *poeto-semantics* for the interpretation of artistic texts (more on this topic in Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2012).

To aggravate the situation, the phenomenon of *transtextuality* (exemplified, most typically, by *intertextuality* and *metatextuality*) can hardly be captured by any existing formal semantic and/or pragmatic model<sup>9</sup>.

Formal semantic systems deal basically with what Borg (2004: 18) dubs "the conventional, standard or literal meaning" of linguistic expressions and their combinations into sentences/propositions, on which they try to specify truth-conditions. To the contrary, literary texts are heavily *figurative* (*non-literal*), though the density of stylistic devices will vary in them according to, among others, a specific genre. Figuration, however, and especially metaphoricalness, have received a certain degree of attention from some formal systems. The topic is broad so for the reasons of space I mention such major attempts in a telegraphic manner. The idea that metaphors need context for their interpretation goes back to Richards and his interactive theory of metaphor propounded in the 1930s. Despite Levinson's (2011: 170–171) claim that both the traditional Aristotelian approach to metaphor and the interactive (tensive) theory of Richards and Max Black can be classified as semantic, Richards (e. g. 1936), quite overtly, preached contextualism as an important feature of human language in general.

Interestingly, already in the 1970s, L. Jonathan Cohen and Avishai Margalit rejected the false claim of the then reigning Chomskyan transformational generativism that "[m]etaphor [...] is either a pathological phenomenon that any account of normal language is right to disregard, or a rare and specialised extension of language, as in poetry" (Cohen and Margalit 1972: 722). Instead, they posited the application of inductive reasoning in the disambiguation between metaphorical

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<sup>9</sup> Even more dramatically, a new direction in contemporary text studies called *transmediality* (*inter-mediality*), studying interconnections between verbal and non-verbal artistic texts (in the broad, semiotic sense of this term) lies beyond the pale of any known traditional formalism.

and non-metaphorical interpretations of sentences, pairing it with the rejection of the *semantically-deviant* vs. *semantically non-deviant* distinction. Also Cresswell (1973: 238–240), within what he labelled *semantic pragmatics*, recognized the need to talk about “metaphorical or conversational meaning” in the contexts in which literal meaning is inadequate or straightforwardly inappropriate. His treatment of context as – theoretically – indefinitely rich (cf. also Partee 1989: 96) allowed him to cater for the figurative creativity of natural language by means of pragmatic explication. In the similar vein, Levinson (1983: 8, 170ff.) argues for the need of a pragmatically based approach to metaphor and other tropes (metonymy, synecdoche, irony, suppression, allusion), referring his discussion to the Gricean concept of the exploitation of conversational maxims. The non-propositional, highly contextualized and psychologically-oriented theory of metaphor and irony within the *relevance model* (Sperber and Wilson [1986, 1995] 2011: 324–339) is another case of the pragmatically-biased approach to figurativeness. By now, the reader will have noticed that all of the above-mentioned proposals turn to the pragmatic formalism as a natural extension of semantic interpretation. As a result, artistic texts appear as clearly belonging to the domain of a mixed semantico-pragmatic analysis.

## 7. Future prospects for the study of literary texts and (in)formal semantic and pragmatic paradigms

What emerges from our previous considerations is a suggestion that discourses in general (and artistic texts in particular) could be fruitfully studied within the *cumulative theory of pragmatics*, initiated by Montague, but with the Carnapian roots, in fact. According to this view, semantics is superposed upon the syntactic component, to be comprised – in turn – within the scope of pragmatic relations.

If this kind of the ‘Chinese boxes’ arrangement of grammar should sound unsatisfactory to some semanticists, a different but equally, if not more, promising paradigm exists within the broad range of *Dynamic Semantics*, discussed in some detail by Jaszczolt (2006), who distinguishes between its three offshoots. In the *Dynamic Predicate Logic* (cf. Groenendijk and Stokhof 1991), certain semantic phenomena, like for instance reference, are no longer limited to isolated sentences but operate across sequences of sentences in discourse. These sequences of “acquiring contexts”, which influence the interpretation dynamically, are of particular interest to literary semanticists in the light of our earlier discussion of the incrementality as a characteristic feature in the construction and interpretation of fictional worlds/texts.

Even more suitable from our “literary” perspective might be the *Discourse Representation Theory* (DRT) of Hans Kamp (going back to 1981, cf. Kamp and Reyle 1993, discussed in Borg 2004: 49 and in Jaszczolt 2006). The model invokes an intermediate level of DRS (Discourse Representation Structure), a kind of interface between syntax and semantics. The interesting aspects of DRS are two.

Firstly, these are mental (conceptual) representations and not only symbolic formulae. Secondly, DRS boxes, through the incorporation of earlier structures, construe a kind of incrementally increasing context for the interpretation of multi-sentential sequences. Apparently, this kind of modelling leaves some place for the inclusion of extra-linguistic information.

Finally, a modification of DRT that goes in the direction of including the speaker's comprehensively captured communicative intentionality is Jaszczolt's *Default Semantics*. Its aim is the construction of a compositional, unified semantic representation. The first stage of interpretation takes into account the syntactic form and the lexical content of an expression, its default intentional meanings, pragmatic inferences and default cultural meanings. The second stage adds the derivation of the implicata. This two-step interpretative procedure relies on a broadly conceived context and is an instance of what Jaszczolt calls *semantization*, viz, the inclusion of pragmatic aspects within a semantic system<sup>10</sup>. Borg (2004: 6) refers to such theories as *use-oriented* or *hybrid semantic theories*. Still, the Dynamic Semantic Systems can be claimed to stand in partial opposition to stronger contextualist theories, which represent the process of *pragmatization*, where the majority of inference processes necessary for the interpretation of an utterance are shifted to pragmatics. The issue is then, basically, about the area of overlap between the two fields of linguistic study.

By no means does the discussion above exhaust the theoretical and methodological possibilities of coping with the meaning of discourse in all its semantic and pragmatic complexity. From the vast spectrum of other contemporary methodological suggestions, with a different degree of formalism implied, let me mention just three.

In 1996, Michael Toolan proposed an *integrational approach* to various genres of discourses within the framework of *total speech*. This appears to be a variant of informal contextualism, in which a very special role is ascribed to discourse interpreters, who often prove to be more creative than traditionally assumed.

In contradistinction, Jerome Feldman ([2006] 2008) voices a new fashion, flourishing of late also among American literary critics, for a *neurobiological explanation* of linguistic processes. Situating himself within the paradigm of cognitive sciences and advocating the thesis of *radical embodiment* as the dominant factor guiding human non-verbal and verbal behaviour, he describes the 'neuron-based' way of construing discourses (specifically narration), in which it is practically impossible to separate semantic considerations (including metaphorization) from the contextually grounded interpretive strategies.

Finally, Kiklewicz (2011) suggests that within the *poststructuralist methodological paradigm*, which is now a dominant research model focused on the fore-

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<sup>10</sup> In a sense, this is also the tactics I have assumed in my classification of language-games in literary discourse (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2004), where the pragmatically-tinged contribution of the authorial persona was included under the label of *semantic games*.



grounding of context, the notion of linguistic sign should be enriched. He postulates a holistic concept of *synergic sign* that combines: form, conceptual content, referential meaning, structure and context. Consequently, an interpretation of the text becomes likewise holistic, non-linear and synergic. It stands to reason that this kind of interpretation is especially suited for the analysis of all types of semiotic texts, literature included.

The enormous theoretical material that I have presented, out of necessity, as a cursory overview, can at this point provide us with an answer to our opening query. I find no better way than to quote Herman Cappelen (2007: 3): “there’s no such thing as *the semantics-pragmatics distinction* and looking for it is a waste of time”. He closes his article with a no less succinct prediction:

In the light of work done by philosophers and linguists on context sensitivity over the last thirty years, the following doesn’t seem too bold a conjecture: no neat, general, and grand solutions are likely to succeed. The patterns of usage for various categories of expressions will differ radically and so will the successful explanations. (Cappelen 2007: 20)

This also implies that the study of artistic texts must proceed in its own, highly eclectic way. Different literary genres will require a different specialized description: roughly along the divide into fiction vs. non-fiction, which changes the modelling depending on whether we need to invoke the notion of possible worlds or truth-in-fiction (truth-at-a world/worlds). Figuration remains a vast field in which no last word has yet been uttered as to the conceptual and linguistic role of tropes. At present, literary linguists have a wide range of more or less formal paradigms to choose from. My expectation and hope is that formal semanticists and pragmaticists will not relinquish their attempts (still too meagre, it seems) at coping with texts/discourses representative of both ‘ordinary’ and artistic languages alike, which are creative in their own peculiar ways.

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