The time-honoured discussion amongst academics as to where to set the boundaries between Language Studies and Literary Studies have aroused much debate in our Philology Departments. With this fact in mind, The Ways of the Word fills an important gap in the context of the modularisation into the new curriculum that most of our English Departments are undergoing. The Ways of the Word offers us a well planned proposal for the analysis of literary texts, in which Linguistics is used in its wider sense as a tool to generate a sound critical approach to the commentary of literary texts based on textual and discourse features.

In general terms, one could say that the task envisioned in The Way of the Word is not new. Some excellent textbooks on literary studies based on linguistic criticism have been published over the last decade (Hasan (1985), Carter & Long (1987), Collie & Slater (1987), McRae & Pantaleoni (1990) or Durant & Fabb (1990), amongst others). Indeed, most of them are mentioned and briefly discussed in the bibliography included at the end of each chapter in The Way of the Word. However, what makes this book different from any other previously published material is that it has been written as a result of the authors' experience in a Spanish University - the University of Seville -; being very specific depending on an expected audience. The authors assume the academic background of those students likely to take a course in the analysis of Literary Texts during the third or fourth year of their degree in English Philology.

Thus, The Ways of the Word can be said to be a different brave new book written on the analysis of literary texts taking into account three main factors: first, it provides a suitable framework to produce individual founded critical commentaries to literary texts in the classroom, where the responses to texts are traditionally woven with the need to produce ‘acceptable responses’, which at the end of the day, are the teacher’s proposals; secondly, it also questions the traditionally teacher centred seminars in Spanish Universities; and finally, it manages to break the already mentioned barrier between linguistic and literary studies. In Gómez Lara and Prieto Pablos’ own words:

Negotiation will rarely occur if the teacher exercises his authority to impose his own response as the only acceptable opinion. The students’ role in the production of “acceptable” responses will then be reduced to more or less accurately reproducing the teacher’s response. The final consequence will be the mutilation of the students’ ability to master their own reading and response skills into the ability to match - and in the case of an exam, to anticipate - the teacher’s authoritative response. (16)

The organization of the book centres upon the idea of the text as a discourse construct around which a number of cotextual, intertextual, and extratextual information must be taken into account in order to build up the whole process of reading. The uniqueness of a literary text lies in the fact that it is the only communicative event in which both the creation and the reception are controlled. This idea is shared by other authors working within the framework of discourse stylistics. Carter & Simpson (1989), in their introduction to a collection of essays state:

All writers [in this collection] take literary texts as occurrences of naturally occurring communication … There is a shared recognition that analysis at the level of discourse al-
lows insights into the semantic structures of whole texts and how such structures produce textual meanings. (Carter & Simpson 1989, 11)

The book consists of four parts with an introduction. The authors propose a redefinition of reading as a discourse process: a text being “a self contained system of linguistic and pragmatic signs whose purpose is to enable the production of communicative experiences” (19). This early definition serves to determine the organization of the following sections: Part One: First Contact is devoted to developing reading/response skills and to the creation and verbalization of the textual image by the student. Part Two is devoted to the linguistic analysis of texts (chapter 2: prosodic analysis; chapter 3: syntactic analysis and chapter 4: semantics analysis). Part Three contains discourse analysis contributions to the analysis of literary texts (chapter 5: discourse analysis and speech acts; chapter 6: analysis of conversation and chapter 7: analysis of narrative). Finally, Part Four, and under the title of Beyond Critical Reading includes chapter 8, almost an afterthought in which the authors discuss some limitations of the analysis proposed. It also traces the link between linguistic criticism and the interpersonal and cultural component of critical reading: “Eventually, we should be able to discern between what the text meant in its time and what it means or represents in ours - or rather, to us and to our particular image of the universe of discourse of which we are part” (420). There are also two indices: the first one contains the references of all the literary samples analysed in the book, the second includes a list of critical terms. There is no final list of references or bibliography. Rather, this is distributed at the end of each chapter followed by a number of selected follow-up readings - which are briefly commented on by the authors.

Thus, The Ways of the Word is organised thematically in a hierarchical way, from the smallest to the biggest units of linguistic analysis, as seeking for the field of discourse from the beginning - from prosodic to pragmatics -. However, some of these theoretical issues are open to misinterpretation due to the titles given to the sections. Prosodic, semantic and lexical analyses are included within the area of “linguistic analysis” (Part Two). This is followed by Part Three under the title “discourse analysis and speech acts”. I would argue that both sections deal with “linguistic” analysis but contain an approach operating at different levels and that it would have been desirable to consider this in the organization of the book.

Chapter 3, devoted to syntactic analysis, presents a surprising aspect not found anywhere else in the book. The authors claim that their approach is ‘eclectic’ in their viewing of grammar as a tool for the analysis of literary texts. In p. 111 one reads: “Our approach to the syntax of the text is rather eclectic both in the terminology we have chosen to use and in the ascription (rather, the lack of ascription) to any specific critical school”. Yet I wonder whether it is both possible, indeed, desirable to be eclectic in any approach to the study of language. What really seems surprising is that these choices are continuously made in The Ways of the Word, even in this same chapter: by including speech and thought presentation narratorial modes within the grammatical approach to the text (chapter 3), by admitting textual cohesion just within the lexical analysis omitting the grammatical ties (chapter 4), or by combining pragmatics and discourse analysis as just one model of analysis (chapters 5, 6, and 7). Most choices adopted in The Ways of the Word seem to me systematic and wise (they give sense within its internal structure). My objection is that is seems somewhat contradictory to claim that the approach adopted in chapter 3 with regard to syntax is eclectic. In fact, it would have just have been desirable to include here a reference to original frameworks used in order to avoid the problem.

To my mind, the most satisfying part in the book is Part Three, in particular chapters five and six, entitled “discourse analysis and speech acts” and “analysis of conversation”. They are particularly illustrating as a result of the copious number of examples and rigour.
of illustration with regard to the theoretical sources used. One may clearly perceive between the lines the authors’ enthusiasm for this type of approach. Chapter 7, analysis of narrative is also included here. In fact, what at first seems to be a surprising choice due to the complex nature of narrative, is revealed to be otherwise in the context of the book. Narrative is looked at in *Ways of the World* as a discourse event. The nature of narrative, participants (narrators, characters) and narrative structures are satisfactorily discussed in this section. Yet, it would have been desirable to include in this section some space for ‘point of view’ next to ‘narrators’ or ‘setting’ as part of its discourse world. Similarly, it could be argued that the section on modes of speech and thought presentation included in the chapter devoted to syntactic analysis (ch.3) should have some sort of reference in this section.

Within the organization of each chapter, *The Ways of the World* offers a good proportion of theoretical background combined with examples and exercises. Theoretical explanations are woven into a number of concrete points for discussion illustrated by a selected case study which is framed separately from the main text. At the end of each chapter there is also a sub-section called *Analysis and Commentary* in which there is a selection of texts which are fully analysed according to the theoretical point discussed.

The framed case studies inserted in each chapter present some noteworthy character istics. First, there are a number of examples which are repeated systematically in each section and are analysed from a different perspective throughout the book. Thus, by the end the students have been progressively offered full and detailed analyses of these texts. Secondly, these examples have no title, and there is no identified author. The students are exposed to ‘bare texts’ in which the author’s responsibility has become irrelevant for the purpose of the analysis. During the presentation of *The Ways of the World* at the University of Granada last Fall, this issue inevitably was commented upon. The authors admitted that it had been one of the most difficult decisions to make during the elaboration of the book. They defended the validity of this choice, arguing that for years students have been contaminated by the learned ideas about an author and his/her work when asked to produce a response to a literary text. The omission of all the extratextual information is thus intended to help them concentrate on the product, i.e. the text itself; The authors feel that this approach may help them produce their own response without the constraints imposed by extra-textual elements:

What our suggestions can contribute is to improve the reading skills and the awareness of the textual and discursive resources used by both the author and the reader in the transmission and comprehension of meaning; and these will, in turn, let readers know what exactly they need to find outside the text in order to elaborate their commentary. (25)

Although this sounds like a cogent argument, I can still see here a dangerous choice if it is not conveniently handled by the teacher during the sessions. I strongly believe that a literary text cannot be faced in such a fully decontextualized way. As Simpson has aptly pointed out:

> Language is not used in a contextless vacuum; rather, it is used in a host of discourse contexts which are impregnated with the ideology of social systems and institutions. Because language operates within this social dimension it must, of necessity reflect, and some would argue, *construct* ideology. (Simpson 1993, 6)

Thus, my main concern about the authors’ decision to focus the commentaries on ‘bare’ texts is that it would imply an extra effort on the part of the teacher to emphasize the partiality of this type of exercise. In other words, it should be clear for the students that they are producing a partial - although valid - appreciation which should be confronted with a properly contextualized view of the text. And, above all, it is questionable whether titles should ever be removed as they are clearly a relevant part of the textual information of a
literary piece of work. Indeed, in Part Four, the authors wisely mention the negotiability of responses to a text as part of commentary techniques taking into account that “the shared cultural assumptions between the author and the reader conform the historical locus where meaning is produced” (419). I would have liked to find these comments earlier in the book as a support to the necessity of a contextualised reading of the literary text.

One of the successes of The Ways of the Words is the ‘way’ the touchstones of linguistic criticism are interfaced with other purely linguistic descriptions. The reader is progressively exposed to concepts such as the cline of literariness, genres differentiation, definition of rhythm, or speech acts classifications - just to mention a few - in a smooth easy way. The authors have managed to fit within the general scope of their analysis concrete topics that the students may have confronted separately in a number of different courses - for instance, clause types, semantic roles interface with narratorial speech modes in chapter 3 -. Moreover, their descriptions are easy and well illustrated. This is particularly welcome as many of the issues discussed are parts of complex theoretical net works. Another positive feature is the permanent reference to the History of English in some of the linguistic and literary explanations offered. These references contribute highly to the integrated, multidisciplinary approach that The Ways of the Word offers the student.

The Ways of the Word is also a highly methodological book in the sense that it can easily be used as a textbook for a number of different subjects in our new curricula, whether linguistically or literary oriented (literary commentary, stylistics linguistic criticism or applied linguistics). However, the edition is a bit dense. Page and line margins are very narrow and I would say the font is somewhat small, for at times the exposition becomes difficult to follow not so much because of the content but because of the way this is distributed on the page. A more “user-friendly” edition form would definitely facilitate its reading; it would also contribute to making the subject more attractive to the students.

To sum up, I welcome a textbook like The Ways of the Word for its rigour, content density and systematicity. This was fully recognized in AEDEAN ‘94. There, The Ways of the Word was awarded the “Enrique García Díez” prize for best monography published in English language and literature. Finally, I would also like to congratulate Dr. Manuel Gómez Lara and Dr. Juan A. Prieto Pablos for their courage in confronting the thorny arena of interdisciplinarity with such an amiable and comprehensive approach to the field of linguistic criticism.

WORKS CITED

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