

Analytic Philosophy of Literature: Problems and Prospects

Jukka Mikkonen

1. Introduction

Analytic philosophy of literature appears to be in a state of flux. On the one hand, there is a growing interest in interdisciplinary study and dialogue with other disciplines that can be seen in the study of fiction and narratives, for instance. On the other hand, there is a—mostly implicit—disagreement about the very aims and methods of the analytic approach, for example, whether it should engage in a dialogue with literary studies or psychology and neurosciences, or to be a ‘pure’ philosophical enterprise. In this essay, I shall explore the aims and methods, and the problems and prospects, of analytic philosophy of literature. I shall first briefly discuss the characteristic and history of analytic philosophy of literature. After that, I shall examine certain alleged weaknesses of the analytic approach, such as its neglect for the historical and the empirica. Finally, I shall consider the prospects of the analytic enterprise and suggest how it can contribute to our understanding of literature.

2. Analytic Philosophy and Aesthetics

During the recent decades, analytic philosophers have become interested in theoretical self-reflection and the history of their approach¹. Michael Dummet, for one, claims that ‘[i]t is important to analytical philosophy that it understand its own history, seeing itself in the context of the general history of philosophy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: especially is this true at a time when it is undergoing profound changes.’² Likewise, Avrum Stroll holds that analytic philosophy is ‘essentially a humanistic endeavour’ and thus ‘intimately tied to its past in a way that science is not’³. These sort of commonsensical remarks are interesting, for analytic philosophers have often considered philosophy an

¹ Current metaphilosophical discussions on the nature of analytic philosophy are often seen to originate from Dummet’s work *Origins of Analytic Philosophy* (1993)—or his earlier work on Frege. For a comprehensive overview of the key themes in the discussion, see Hans-Johann Glock’s *What is Analytic Philosophy* (2008). For recent work in the history of analytic philosophy, see e.g. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy*, edited by Michael Beaney (2013).

² Dummet 1998, p. 1

³ Stroll 2000, p. 246

ahistorical activity, the most radical ones even wanting to outsource the study of the history of philosophy for the history of ideas⁴.

But what is analytic philosophy? The philosopher Dagfinn Føllesdal introduces three customary ways to define a philosophical tradition: (i) by methods, (ii) by doctrines or problems, and (iii) by genetic relations. As Føllesdal however shows, these sort of definitions make analytic philosophy either so narrow that it excludes some key figures of the enterprise or so broad that it includes figures that are clearly outside the tradition.⁵ To begin with, there seems to be no unified view of the analytic *method*, let alone analysis⁶. Not all analytic philosophers have engaged in conceptual analysis or some other kind of analysis of unifying kind. On the other hand, some non-analytic philosophers—Husserl, and even Socrates—analysed concepts⁷. As for *doctrines*, there is no a shared view of the aim and nature of philosophy among analytic philosophers. For instance, the characteristic which Simon Critchley implicitly attributes to analytic philosophy, that is, scientism (or naturalism)⁸, does not unite all but only some analytic philosophers. Defining analytic philosophy in terms of *problems* it studies seems also untenable, for the same problems are studied in other philosophical traditions. Appeals to schools or *genetic relations* are also problematic: for example, Bolzano anticipated the ideas of Frege, Carnap, Tarski and Quine and treated the ideas in an ‘analytic’ manner; yet, Bolzano did not have a teacher–student relationship to any analytic philosopher proper⁹.

⁴ See Grafton 2004, p. 318

⁵ Føllesdal 1993, pp. 3–7. Føllesdal thinks that analytic philosophy is best understood an approach ‘very strongly concerned with argument and justification’ (ibid., p. 7). For problems in defining analytic philosophy in terms of doctrines or methods, see Glock (2008, chs. 5 & 6). For historical and contemporary views of the nature of analytic philosophy, see Preston (2010).

⁶ Michael Beaney (2007, p. 1), for one, remarks that ‘both Russell and Moore were notoriously unclear as to what exactly “analysis” meant, and they use the term in a number of ways throughout their writings’.

⁷ Some analytic philosophers have suggested that the analytic method, understood as conceptual analysis, indeed traces its roots back to Socrates. As L. Jonathan Cohen (1986, p. 49) summarizes it, ‘[a]nalytical philosophy is occupied, at an appropriately general level, and in a great variety of ways, with the reasoned discussion of what can be a reason for what. As such it is a strand in the total history of western philosophy from Socrates onwards rather than just a modern movement.’

⁸ Critchley 1998, p. 12

⁹ See Raatikainen 2013, p. 13

It might be best to speak of analytic philosophy as a *manner* of tackling philosophical problems. Analytic philosophy is often characterized as an approach that emphasizes conceptual clarity, coherence and argumentation, and attempts to achieve its ends by the use of formal logic and linguistic analysis, for instance. Analytic philosophers also characteristically emphasize objectivity and truth and tend to consider philosophical problems timeless and universal.¹⁰

Since the beginning, analytic philosophers have had a special interest in literature. Roughly, there are two central reasons for this. First, analytic philosophers have traditionally been concerned with questions about language. As William Elton put it in his introduction for *Aesthetics and Language* (1954), the aim of the anthology was ‘to diagnose and clarify some aesthetic confusions, which it holds to be mainly linguistic in origin’¹¹. Literature, being essentially a linguistic art form, was a rather obvious object for philosophers studying issues such as meaning, truth, and reference, and language in general. Second, analytic philosophers’ excitement for literary works of characteristically fictional kind is also understandable, for *fictionality* brings up questions related to ontology and logic, such as the question of the nature of fictional characters. Nevertheless, in the analytic tradition, philosophers’ interest in fictional literature has been twofold. Roughly, aestheticians have studied literature as a form of art, whereas philosophers working in other areas have turned to literary works in order to illustrate or test their theories of ontology or meaning, for example. However, these two ways to approach the subject converge in theories of fictionality, for example.

For the first generation analytic aestheticians, the aim of aesthetics was, as Arnold Isenberg defines it in the conclusion of his 1950 report to the Rockefeller Foundation, ‘*an analysis of the concepts and principles of criticism* and other aesthetic studies, such as the psychology of art’¹². Furthermore, Monroe C. Beardsley’s influential work *Aesthetics*, subtitled ‘Problems

¹⁰ See Lamarque 2009, viii. For characteristics of analytic philosophy, see also Soames (2006, xi–xv). One should note that the interest in formal logic does not unite all analytic philosophers—it excludes ordinary language philosophers, for example—and, further, that many logicians have based their theory of logic in phenomenological philosophy (see Raatikainen 2013, pp. 12–13).

¹¹ Elton 1954, p. 1

¹² Isenberg 1987, p. 128; emphasis in original. Peter Lamarque (2013, pp. 770–771) remarks that ‘analytical methods’ had been applied to aesthetics already in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, in prominent philosophical

in the Philosophy of Criticism' and published in 1958, greatly substantiated this view, in which analytic aesthetics was considered a second-order discipline that aims at clarifying and refining critical terms by investigating the practice of criticism¹³. Originally, analytic aesthetics aimed to get rid of 'dreariness' in aesthetics, as John Passmore put it, and, by being ruthless in making distinctions, to reveal the characteristics of its subject matter.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it has repeatedly been claimed that analytic aesthetics has become dreary and dull itself. Literary critics and philosophers in other traditions have not paid much attention to analytic philosophical study of literature, which the art scholar Karl-Heinz Lüdeking thinks is due to that analytic philosophy is 'widely considered to be pettifogging, boring and irrelevant'¹⁵.

I shall next discuss some features of the analytic approach which are often cited as reasons for that literary scholars and philosophers in others traditions do not find analytic aesthetics appealing. Rather than seeing them as limits of the analytic enterprise, I consider them potential obstacles and pitfalls, which analytic philosophers of literature should acknowledge in order for their theories to be more illuminating and telling. The problems I shall discuss are themselves abstractions, and many analytic philosophers are aware of them and reflect them in their work; perhaps it would be best to describe them as problematic tendencies or ghosts that haunt in the discipline.

3. Obstacles & Pitfalls

To begin with, there is a potential problem in the way analytic aestheticians approach their questions, or the *secondariness* of the discipline¹⁶. As philosophers Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen remark, analytic aesthetics 'has tended to give priority to topics arising from concerns elsewhere in philosophy'. Further, Lamarque and Olsen think that '[t]he emphasis

journals and works such as David W. Prall's *Aesthetic Judgment* (1929) and *Aesthetic Analysis* (1936) and John Hospers' *Meaning and Truth in the Arts* (1946).

¹³ For a similar view of aesthetics as a philosophy of criticism, see Jerome Stolnitz's *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism* (1960).

¹⁴ Passmore 1951, pp. 320 & 327

¹⁵ Lüdeking 2010, p. 100

¹⁶ The early analytic philosophy of literature may be considered 'secondary' in two senses, as it considered itself subordinate to the main areas of philosophy and ancillary to literary criticism. Of these, the weakness discussed relates to the former sense of secondariness.

on logic and philosophy of language, for example, led inevitably to an interest in questions about meaning and truth in aesthetics'¹⁷. It is somewhat troublesome that questions in analytic philosophy of literature often derive from questions in certain core areas in philosophy, such as epistemology, and especially that they employ the concepts used in studying these 'primary' matters. For example, the questions of authorial intention and the 'meaning' of a literary work, and the focus on propositions, originate from the philosophy of language and theory of meaning. Such questions, although interesting from a philosophical point of view, might not shed much light on literature *as* literature or help us to understand aesthetic values¹⁸. Even though many contemporary philosophers of literature focus on the distinctive questions that derive from our encounters with literary works (and literary practice in general), together with theoretical questions formulated by literary scholars, one of the burdens of analytic aesthetics and philosophy of literature is that it still considers itself subservient to the 'major' areas in philosophy, an approach where literary works serve rather as a test case for theories of meaning.

Another putative problem with the analytic enterprise relates to its urge for *ahistorical objectivity*, an ideal which manifests itself both in analytic philosophers' conception of philosophical problems and their notion of 'literature'. Analytic philosophers tend to treat philosophical problems as timeless and ahistorical, by appealing to logic and argument rather than observations of social, political and ideological factors¹⁹. Nevertheless, it has often been claimed that analytic philosophers lack historical self-reflection and that this lack is an obstacle for the proper comprehension of the problems. Nicholas Wolterstorff, an analytic philosopher himself, states that analytic philosophers do not ponder why historical philosophers have asked the questions they have asked and used the concepts they have used. Neither, Wolterstorff claims, do analytic philosophers ponder why they themselves ask the questions they ask²⁰. Many have connected the lack of self-reflection to alleged crises in analytic philosophy. Jaakko Hintikka, for example, asserts that the survival of analytic

¹⁷ Lamarque & Olsen 2004a, p. 4

¹⁸ For a recent formulation of this view, see Landy 2012, pp. 4–11

¹⁹ See Lamarque & Olsen 2004a, p. 2

²⁰ Wolterstorff 2003, p. 20–21. Richard Rorty, in turn, sees analytic philosophy as 'an attempt to escape from history—an attempt to find nonhistorical conditions of any possible historical development' (Rorty 1980, p. 9).

philosophy requires theoretical self-reflection and a change from within²¹. On a smaller scale, the dismissal of the historical background of philosophical problems and the focus on logical issues may lead to a situation in which problems in the philosophy of literature start to live their life as abstract debates, distanced from the significance of the problems in our encounters with literature, as in certain discussions on authorial intention, theory of fiction, or the debate on readers 'imaginative resistance' to deviant moral views in literature.

Gilbert Ryle once remarked that the 'wise rambler occasionally, though not incessantly, looks back over his shoulder in order to link up the place he has got to with the country through which he has recently passed'. As Ryle pointed out, one's attempts to trace one's 'proximate origins' are valuable by improving one's 'sense of direction' and helping one to understand 'the contemporary scene'²². A glance at recent work in the philosophy of literature suggests that many contemporary analytic philosophers consider it important to track the history of the problem they are scrutinizing. Contemporary philosophers also like to discuss the *raisons d'être* of their inquiry²³.

Still, one may ask for more context-sensitivity and attention for the particular in analytic philosophy of literature, as the tendency to overt *abstractions* can be seen in many analytic philosophers' notion of literature, for example. Analytic philosophers often speak of literature as if there would be a common, transhistorical concept of 'literature', and ignore the various historical and contemporary uses of the word. Further, we analytic philosophers have traditionally considered realistic literature as the model for literature *tout court* (realism considered here both a historical literary movement and a mode of representation). Arguably, our interest in realism stems from our liking of uncomplicated²⁴ literary examples and our emphasis on objectivity and truth. This idea of objectivity is apparent, for instance, in those theories of 'fictional truth' which take the narrator to offer us a transparent view to the world of the work, as well as discussions on the 'meaning' of the work, where it is thought that

²¹ Hintikka 1998, p. 260

²² Ryle 1957, p. 1. Bernard Williams also argues that analytic philosophy should be more concerned with the past. For his defence of historical approaches in philosophical enterprise, see Williams (2002) and (2008)

²³ See e.g. *Why Literary Studies? Raisons D'être of a Discipline*, edited by Anders Pettersson and Stein Haugom Olsen (2011).

²⁴ Literary examples have often been considered too complicated and detailed for moral philosophical examples (see Phillips 1982, 9).

literary works have a certain fixed meaning that is determined by the author and/or the text, and the reader's task is to reconstruct that meaning. What is not problematized is that generalizations drawn from Tolstoy's novels might not carry to modernism and beyond.

Indeed, it is frequently said that analytic philosophers operate with *obsolete conceptions* of literature and literary criticism. Tzachi Zamir remarks that

‘[P]hilosophical criticism appears to operate within the conceptual parameters of the New Criticism and the Arnoldian humanism and romanticism that underlie it. The charge is that philosophical criticism has not seriously dealt with the numerous challenges to formalism within literary studies. It thus replays the ‘Old Criticism’ practiced before the cultural turn in literary studies, and it does this without addressing the reasons that have led literary critics to avoid thematic reflection through poetry.’²⁵

In addition to an obsolete view of literature (or the focus on realism), an obsolete view of literary criticism is problematic in analytic philosophical theories which seek to justify their theoretical claims via criticism or present descriptive claims about what critics do in interpreting literary works.

What is also dubious is analytic philosophers' striving for *universality*²⁶. For example, thinking of the diversity of works of literature, it is questionable if there could ever be a theory of the cognitive value of literature that would be both extensive and non-trivial. Some works elicit emotions that might contribute to cognition, some provide imaginative experiences that might count as subjective knowledge, some may be seen similar to thought-experiment in philosophy. Because of the universalizing tendency, it seems difficult for analytic philosophers to engage in a dialogue with literary critics, at least those who hold that critical concepts are more or less tied to particular works and that the literary work under analysis modifies and contests the theoretical concepts needed to understand it²⁷.

²⁵ Zamir 2007, pp. 44–45.

²⁶ On the other hand, a focus on narrow genres, such as rock covers or self-portrait photography, has become common in contemporary analytic aesthetics.

²⁷ Here, see Eagleton 2012, p. 14

My final concern in the analytic enterprise is its *unconcern for the empirical*. For instance, the literary critic Anders Pettersson remarks that analytic philosophical theories of literary interpretation seldom make reference to *empirical studies* of literary reception, although the theories claim to describe ‘the practice of reading’²⁸. Indeed, philosophical debates on readers’ ‘typical motives’, for example, often stagnate at intentions. But our *horror mundi* manifests itself also in other ways, such as our eagerness to use *invented* examples in illustrating our views. Examples drawn from literature, in turn, are thought to bring unnecessary complexity—interpretive issues—into one’s thinking of the logical aspects of the problem. Thus, say, the thought-experiment of a historical novel in which every sentence would be asserted by the author. While examples of this sort well illustrate the philosophical argument at hand, their artificiality causes suspicion: how plausible is a theory of literature (or fictionality) that requires invented examples?

The issues introduced are matters that are repeatedly said to lessen the credibility of the analytic approach in the eyes of literary scholars and others interested in the intersections of philosophy and literature. Of course, the emphasis on logical matters, for instance, is not only a characteristic of the analytic approach but also one of its chief virtues; it is not the logical emphasis that is problematic but rather the philosopher’s overt abstractions and her invention of hypothetical examples that are aimed to illustrate her theory. Also, it is difficult to say what is the conception of literature relevant to philosophical aesthetics, which is more or less general in nature. Nevertheless, it would greatly benefit the analytic approach, would analytic philosophers articulate and problematize these issues, acknowledge historical changes in the practices of literature and literary criticism and engage directly and in detail with particular literary works.

4. The Role of Analytic Philosophy of Literature

Although there has been relatively little metaphilosophical discussion within analytic philosophy of literature, one may find, roughly, three popular aspects to the role of analytic philosophy of literature. These are the analysis of critical concepts, a philosophy of science, and the study of the ‘phenomenon of literature’.

Analysis of critical concepts

²⁸ Pettersson 2008, p. 63

As said, analytic aesthetics was originally understood as the philosophy of criticism or metacriticism, its purpose being to investigate critical concepts and principles. This is a view which Richard Shusterman, for instance, still emphasizes in his introduction for the anthology *Analytic Aesthetics* (1989)²⁹. Many if not most contemporary analytic aestheticians think, however, that the study of the fundamental issues in criticism—its methods, aims, and concepts—is not only too narrow but also a misguided description of aesthetics. Kathleen Stock and Katherine Thomson-Jones, for instance, remark that analytic aestheticians today are critical to the ‘narrow analytic program’ of the pioneering analytic aestheticians. As they observe, the scope of aesthetics today is broader and more diverse than the mere analysis of concepts and principles. Also, questions in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind are given much attention in contemporary aesthetics.³⁰

Indeed, Beardsley’s tripartite distinction, in which the *philosopher* studies what the *critic* says about the *poet’s* work³¹, is no longer tenable. Peter Lamarque has forcefully shown that criticism is too diverse a field that a methodologically coherent view of it could be presented and that metacriticism will fail both as a descriptive and normative exercise: Because of the multiplicity of critical approaches, *descriptive metacriticism*, which aims to explain critical principles, could only deliver a set of principles relative to each approach. In turn, *normative metacriticism*, which aims to formulate interpretative principles that ought to be followed, would simply describe the principles of a given approach, and the validity of those principles would become disputed after the critical approach had been declined.³² Moreover, the philosophy of literature cannot be construed as metacriticism because of its concern for questions falling outside criticism. Nonetheless, there are some contemporary aestheticians who think that philosophy of literature consists to a large part of metacriticism. For example, in *On Criticism* (2009), Noël Carroll maintains ‘that the time has come to rejuvenate [metacriticism], since there is probably more art criticism being produced and consumed now than ever before in the history of the world’³³. The idea of philosophy of literature as metacriticism is also implicit in many analytic philosophers’ work.

²⁹ Shusterman 1989, p. 7

³⁰ See Stock & Thomson-Jones 2008, xii

³¹ Beardsley 1958, pp. 3–7

³² Lamarque 2009, p. 7

³³ Carroll 2009, p. 1

While the philosophy of literature is not to be identified with metacriticism, there is need for philosophy of literature as an analysis of critical *concepts*, where analysis is understood not only as descriptive analysis that purports to show how concepts are used in criticism but also as constructive analysis that aims to reformulate concepts that are vague or indeterminate, such as ‘fiction’ and ‘narrative’.

It has been common to defend the analytic enterprise by contrasting it with critical theory—which is seen to embrace disbelief in rationality and truth and to prefer persuasion over argumentation—and by emphasizing the clarity, precision and argumentative strength of the analytic enterprise³⁴. Sure enough, clarity, precision, and argumentativity are prospects of the analytic enterprise. Extensive conceptual analysis and the insistence on detail and mechanics are characteristic of the analytic enterprise and invaluable in analyzing critical concepts, theories, and disputes. Moreover, clarity and coherence do not need to exclude profundity³⁵.

In turn, those critics of the analytic approach who have no education in philosophy might have difficulties in differentiating between the philosopher’s *aims* and *methods*, and to understand the context and meaning of the analysis³⁶. As the literary critic David Gorman puts it,

‘for better or worse, the power and interest of analytic philosophy lies in its *technical details* more than its large programmatic generalizations; and unless literary theorists are willing to master some of this detail, they can write at length about analytic philosophy, but without any insight.’³⁷

Certainly, there are good reasons for analytic philosophers’ logico-systematic inquiries. As Lamarque and Olsen put it,

‘it has long been thought a merit of [the analytic] enterprise that it favors slow, meticulous work – finding strong arguments to support precise, clearly defined theses – over generalizations weakly or imprecisely defended. Certainly, debates by analytic

³⁴ See e.g. Lamarque & Olsen 2004b, pp. 199–200

³⁵ Åhlberg 1993, p. 15

³⁶ See Gorman 1990, p. 656

³⁷ Gorman 1990, p. 656; emphasis in original

aestheticians seem to move slowly, but that is because attention to detail is highly valued.’³⁸

The piecemeal effort and insistence on detail may also produce theoretical tools. The literary critic Peter Swirski thinks that it would greatly improve literary critics’ work would they be familiar with David Lewis’s Reality and Mutual Belief principles and with their roles in the analysis of fictional truth and implicit story content.³⁹ Likewise, Terry Eagleton argues that ‘the rigour and technical expertise of the best philosophy of literature contrasts favourably with the intellectual looseness of some literary theory, and as has addressed questions left mostly unexamined by those in the other camp’, such as fictionality⁴⁰. Clearly, analytic philosophy is at its best in ‘slow, meticulous work’ and its attention to detail, and there is need for it as a metacritical, clarificatory enterprise.

A philosophy of science

Philosophers of literature have not only investigated literary criticism but also other approaches to literature. For example, the study of the ‘psychology of art’ has been part of analytic aesthetics since the beginning, and recently more and more analytic philosophers have been eager to turn to the sciences of mind in order to advance traditional debates in aesthetics. Gregory Currie, for one, maintains that aestheticians should get out of the armchair and look at different branches of psychology, neuroscience, linguistics and economic and sociological studies of the art market⁴¹. (Currie, however, wisely reminds one that ‘the problems with which aestheticians deal are very various, and not all of them ought to be approached in the same way’⁴².) In particular, Currie is dissatisfied with philosophers who make *empirical claims* about the educative function of literature but provide no evidence for their claims. He suggests that in discussing the effects which literary works are claimed to have on their readers, philosophers should look at studies conducted in experimental psychology.⁴³ And what is the role of philosophy? Currie thinks that none of the empirical studies ‘will be worth much unless we retain a commitment to the clarity that

³⁸ Lamarque & Olsen 2004a, p. 5; see also Swirski 2010, p. 11

³⁹ Swirski 2010, p. 12

⁴⁰ Eagleton 2012, p. 11

⁴¹ Currie 2013, pp. 435–436

⁴² Currie 2013, p. 442

⁴³ Currie 2013, p. 448

philosophical reflection of a traditional kind can bring.’⁴⁴ As he sees it, the role of philosophy is to formulate theoretical models, ‘especially given that psychological work in this area sometimes suffers from an impoverished view of the explanatory options.’⁴⁵

On the other hand, there is need for philosophical considerations in assessing the explanatory power of scientific approaches to literature. Philosophical reflection is required in analyzing the assumptions, concepts and results of empirical studies of literary reception. Of course, studying scientific approaches to literature does not require one’s *committing* to them; sceptics are welcome too. One of the crucial questions is whether psychological studies—which generally do not distinguish between ‘unskilled’ and ‘skilled’ readers, for instance—may illuminate the practices of reading works of literature as works of art⁴⁶.

A philosophy of (literary) art

In addition to analysing critical concepts and exploring literary critical and scientific study of literature, there is need for the philosophy of literature in the most comprehensive sense as a philosophy of art. This conception of the discipline is supported by Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, who emphasize the need of an *aesthetics* of literature that studies the act of reading imaginative literature and the nature of values and appreciation associated with literary works⁴⁷. Lamarque, for one, thinks that philosophy should explore the ‘fundamental principles’ and ‘conceptual connections’ in the practice of literature⁴⁸. In his view, the philosopher of literature studies

‘the phenomenon, common to most if not all cultures, of elevating certain kinds of linguistic activities – notably story-telling or poetry-making or drama – to an art form issuing in products that are revered and of cultural significance’⁴⁹.

This sort of study is not an empirical enquiry into a particular empirical institution; rather it ‘looks at foundational issues in the inquiry itself, its methods, aims, presuppositions, modes

⁴⁴ Currie 2013, pp. 435–436

⁴⁵ Currie (forthcoming)

⁴⁶ See Lamarque 2014, p. 200n

⁴⁷ Lamarque & Olsen 2004b, p. 203

⁴⁸ Lamarque 2009, vii

⁴⁹ Lamarque 2009, p. 8

of argument or evidence or reasoning, the status of its central claims, and its basic concepts.’⁵⁰ However, Lamarque remarks that a philosophical investigation is not worth much if it becomes too abstract or if it loses touch with the literary works themselves or critical works that comment on them.⁵¹

Trends and approaches in criticism change fast, and philosophy of literature is needed in drawing an overall picture of the phenomenon of literature: a picture that includes the author, the work, and the reader. The object of such a study is the literary practice, literary values, and the experience of literature—including all its aesthetic, cognitive, emotional and ethical dimensions. In this comprehensive view, philosophical analysis is a means in studying literature as human action and a distinct artform.

5. Endword

In this essay, I have discussed the problems and prospects of analytic philosophy of literature. While I have said that there are certain obstacles and pitfalls in the analytic approach which analytic philosophers should acknowledge in their work in order to make their views more credible in the eyes of literary scholars, I think there will always be a certain kind of divergence between philosophers, who aim for generality and like the multiplicity of examples, and literary critics, who are interested in particular works and different ways by which the content of a given work might be rendered. The gap between the disciplines is likely to remain, but I do not consider it simply as a problem. There is no progress without dialectic, and the discrepancy between philosophy and literary studies is intriguing as it prevents theoretical stagnation.

Bibliography

- Beaney, Michael 2007. ‘The Analytic Turn in Early Twentieth-Century Philosophy’. In *The Analytic Turn: Analysis in Early Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology*, edited by Michael Beaney. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–30
- Beaney, Michael (ed.) 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁰ Lamarque 2009, pp. 4–5

⁵¹ Lamarque 2009, vii

- Beardsley, Monroe C. 1981/1958. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*.
Second edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Carroll, Noël 2009. *On Criticism*. New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, L. Jonathan 1986. *The Dialogue of Reason: An Analysis of Analytical Philosophy*.
Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Critchley, Simon 1998. 'Introduction: What is Continental Philosophy?' In *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, edited by Simon Critchley & William R. Schroeder. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 1–17.
- Currie, Gregory 2010. *Narratives and Narrators: A Philosophy of Stories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Currie, Gregory 2013. 'On Getting Out of the Armchair to Do Aesthetics'. In *Philosophical^[SEP]Methodology: The Armchair or the Laboratory?* edited by Matthew C. Haug. New York: Routledge, pp. 435–450.
- Currie, Gregory (forthcoming). 'Methods in the Philosophy of Literature and Film'. To appear in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Methodology*, edited by Herman Cappelen, John Hawthorne & Tamar Szabo Gendler. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dummett, Michael 1998/1993. *Origins of Analytical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Eagleton, Terry 2012. *The Event of Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Elton, William 1954. 'Introduction'. In *Aesthetics and Language*, edited by William Elton. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 1–12.
- Føllesdal, Dagfinn 1997.^[SEP]'Analytic Philosophy: What is It and Why Should One Engage in It?' [1993]. In *The Rise of Analytic Philosophy*, edited by Hans-Johann Glock. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 1–16.
- Gibson, John 2007. *Fiction and the Weave of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Glock, Hans-Johann 1997. 'Introduction'. In *The Rise of Analytic Philosophy*, edited by Hans-Johann Glock. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. xii–xiv.
- Glock, Hans-Johann 2008. *What Is Analytic Philosophy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gorman, David 1990. 'From Small Beginnings: Literary Theorists Encounter Analytic Philosophy'. *Poetics Today*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 647–659.
- Grafton, Anthony 2004. 'A Note from Inside the Teapot'. In *Teaching New Histories of Philosophy*, edited by J. B. Schneewind. Princeton: Princeton University Center for Human Values.

- Hintikka, Jaakko 1998. 'Who is About to Kill Analytic Philosophy?'. In *The Story of Analytic Philosophy: Plot and Heroes*. Edited by Anat Biletzki and Anat Matar. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 253–269.
- Isenberg, Arnold 1987/1950. 'Analytical Philosophy and the Study of Art'. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 125–136.
- Lamarque, Peter 2009. *Philosophy of Literature*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lamarque, Peter 2013. 'Analytic Aesthetics'. In *Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy*, edited by Michael Beaney. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 770–794.
- Lamarque, Peter 2014. *The Opacity of Narrative*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Lamarque, Peter & Stein Haugom Olsen 2004a. 'General Introduction'. In *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition*, edited by Peter Lamarque & Stein Haugom Olsen. Malden: Blackwell, pp. 1–5.
- Lamarque, Peter & Stein Haugom Olsen 2004b. 'The Philosophy of Literature: Pleasure Restored'. In *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, edited by Peter Kivy. Malden: Blackwell, pp. 195–214.
- Landy, Joshua 2012. *How to Do Things with Fictions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lüdeking, Karlheinz 2010. 'The Limits of Conceptual Analysis in Aesthetics'. *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 21, No. 39, pp. 100–111.
- Passmore, J. A. 1951. 'The Dreariness of Aesthetics'. *Mind*, Vol. 60, Nro. 239, pp. 318–335.
- Pettersson, Anders 2008. 'Three Problematic Aspects of Analytical Aesthetics'. *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 35, pp. 60–74.
- Pettersson, Anders & Stein Haugom Olsen (eds.) 2011. *Why Literary Studies? Raisons D'être of a Discipline*. Oslo: Novus Press.
- Phillips, D. Z. 1982/1973. 'Allegiance and Change in Morality: A Study in Contrasts'. In D. Z. Phillips, *Through a Darkening Glass: Philosophy, Literature, and Cultural Change*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 9–29.
- Preston, Aaron 2010/2007. *Analytic Philosophy: History of an Illusion*. London: Continuum.
- Raatikainen, Panu 2013. 'What Was Analytic Philosophy?' *Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 11–27.
- Rorty, Richard 1980/1979. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ryle, Gilbert 1957. 'Introduction'. In *The Revolution in Philosophy*, edited by A. J. Ayer. London: Macmillan, pp. 1–11.

- Shusterman, Richard 1989. 'Introduction: Analysing Analytic Aesthetics'. In *Analytic Aesthetics*, edited by Richard Shusterman. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 1–19.
- Silvers, Anita 1987. 'Letting the Sunshine In: Has Analysis Made Aesthetics Clear?' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 137–150.
- Soames, Scott 2006. 'Introduction to the Two Volumes'. In Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century, Vol. 1: The Dawn of Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, xi–xix.
- Stock, Kathleen & Katherine Thomson-Jones 2008. 'Introduction'. In *New Waves in Aesthetics*, edited by Kathleen Stock & Katherine Thomson-Jones. Houndmills: Palgrave-Macmillan, xi–xix.
- Stolnitz, Jerome 1960. *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism: A Critical Introduction*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Stroll, Avrum 2000. *Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Swirski, Peter 2010. *Literature, Analytically Speaking: Explorations in the Theory of Interpretation, Analytic Aesthetics, and Evolution*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Williams, Bernard 2002. *Truth and Truthfulness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Williams, Bernard 2008. 'Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline' [2000]. In Williams, *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline*. Edited by A. W. Moore. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 180–199.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas 2003. 'Why Philosophy of Art Cannot Handle Kissing, Touching, and Crying'. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 61, No. 1, pp. 17–27.
- Zamir, Tzachi 2007. *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Drama*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Åhlberg, Lars-Olof 1993. 'The Nature and Limits of Analytic Aesthetics'. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 5–16.