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*Einführung in die Literaturpragmatik mit einer
Beispielanalyse von Kafkas Roman Der Prozess by Elfie
Poulain (review)*

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necessary to represent the empire” (204). In other words, when taking consistently the view from the center of the empire “without privileging ideas of decline or a particular nation’s rise” (271), a narrative emerges by which the paternalistic state flexibly deals “with the complexities of multinational, popular participation in policy making” (269). From this vantage point, Deak then concludes that the Habsburg Empire “was not ultimately defeated on the field of battle,” noting that “in 1918 were no areas of the Habsburg Empire under enemy occupation” (264–65). Rather, the “war did not continue the process of state making, but ended it” (274). And while Deak admits “signs of decline in the long sweep of history in Habsburg monarchy” (271), such as the repressive stagnation of the *Biedermeier* in the years before the 1848 revolution and military defeats in the 1850s and 1860s, he nevertheless argues for an alternative narrative that is radical in that it views the fractured state from within its center. The extent to which Deak will sway readers may depend on their willingness to accept a strong endorsement of a conservative monarchy. Nonetheless, Deak’s book is a refreshing alternative to an all-too-self-assuring myth of the inevitable decline of the Habsburg dynasty.

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Elfie Poulain, *Einführung in die Literaturpragmatik mit einer Beispielanalyse von Kafkas Roman Der Prozess*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015. 110 pp.

Elfie Poulain’s book *Einführung in die Literaturpragmatik mit einer Beispielanalyse von Kafka’s Roman Der Prozess* is aptly titled. The first portion, more than half of the slim volume, offers an explication of the linguistic field of pragmatics, defining pertinent terms, quoting important theorists, and supplying some examples of applications to literary works. There follows the most original section, a well-executed pragmatic analysis of Franz Kafka’s novel *Der Prozess*. This volume (called a “Lehrbuch” on the back cover) belongs to a pedagogical series, “Sprachwissenschaft Studienbücher,” published by the Winter Universitätsverlag of Heidelberg. Although it is also of scholarly interest beyond the classroom, it will serve well as a useful and well-organized textbook to help students understand and apply one important contemporary method of literary analysis. Kafka scholars might wish that the brief dis-

cussion of Kafka had been enhanced by relating it to some of the innumerable existing studies of his work, including many involving language and thought processes. However, that would have gone beyond the scope of the project. Without a doubt it fulfills the purposes given in the title.

The introduction, "Sprachpragmatik und Literaturtheorie," begins with comments on the relationships that bind language, literature, and reality, in particular countering the view that pragmatics is relevant to historical reality and ordinary, "alltägliche" language, not the invented, fictional world of literature. Wolfgang Iser, who has stated that fiction communicates aspects of reality by means of "Sprachhandlungen und kommunikativem Handeln auf fiktionaler Ebene," is quoted (8). After detailing several other approaches, Poulain notes that interest in applying pragmatic linguistics to literature emerged toward the end of the twentieth century. The section "Die Grundzüge der Pragmatik" introduces the classical "pragmatic triangle," namely semantics (meaning), syntax (adherence to grammatical rules), and pragmatics, which focuses on the effects of discourse in various contexts. A key question is whether a language act succeeds or fails. Considered are the intentions of the speaker, the reference or content of the utterance, the addressee, and the context. Pragmatics emphasizes analysis of speech acts as developed by John Austin and John Searle. Searle identified types of "utterance acts" as propositional, illocutionary (for example, a promise), and perlocutionary (those with external consequences and effects in social interactions). Illocutionary acts convey the speaker's intentions, whereas perlocutionary acts aim at persuading the addressee to act, to carry out the speaker's wishes. Further, Austin distinguished between constative utterances, which provide information that can be verified or refuted, and performative utterances. The latter type are not judged as true or false; they involve the pragmatic use to which the speaker puts them.

Among the literary genres, Poulain asserts that pragmatic analysis is most useful when applied to the novel, which emphasizes communicative and social interactions between characters and their social environment. Pragmatic concepts are useful tools to analyze characters' actions, reactions, and motivations. Relevant are gestures, actions, and words of both speaker and addressee, as well as time, place, and situation as well as social and normative cultural roles.

Additional factors in analyzing fictional discourse are literature's complex relationships to reality and differing types of narration, such as the om-

niscient narrator and the traditional first-person narrator who is not privy to the inner life of other characters. In the twentieth century the “inner monologue” or “stream of consciousness” was developed, as well as “personal” narration which, according to Poulain, Kafka used almost exclusively. An exemplary passage from Kafka’s novel *Der Verschollene* is given. As Poulain explains, at first there is no trace of a narrator; the reader is thrust into the action. Then it seems that someone is observing, and it turns out to be Karl, the protagonist, although first-person pronouns are not used. Poulain states, “Die Wirklichkeit wird so dargestellt, wie Karl sie wahrnimmt, und der Leser erfährt nur das, was im Wissenshorizont der Romangestalt steht” (59). This type of narration seems more authentic to contemporary readers than traditional narrators who know and interpret authoritatively all of the relevant aspects of characters’ past, present, future, and inner lives.

Poulain opens the chapter on *Der Prozeß* with a key question: “Wie kommt es, dass Josef K. am Ende der Romanhandlung ganz bescheiden seine Schuld anerkennt, wo er doch zu Beginn laut und stark seine Unschuld beteuerte?” (81). She comments on the levels of narration: “Der doppelten Wirkung der Sprechakte in Bezug auf Handlung und Bewusstsein entspricht auch die doppelte Struktur dieses Romans, denn die erzählten Geschehnisse spielen sich simultan auf der Ebene der Fakten und auf der Ebene des Bewusstseins des Protagonisten ab” (81). Her analysis traces Josef K.’s verbal interactions with his social environment, as represented by a series of people with various roles. Such communication is intertwined with spatial and situational contexts as well as the development of Josef K.’s thoughts, interpretations, and self-image. Poulain arrives at an answer to the question posed above regarding K.’s acceptance of guilt: “Auf der Bewusstseins Ebene allerdings werden die illokutionären und perlokutionären Effekte sichtbar, die die Reden und Handlungen der anderen Gestalten auf seine Person ausüben” (100). Interactions with his social environment, especially representatives of the court, bring about a progressive change in K.’s consciousness. However, Poulain does not overstate the results of the pragmatic approach. It produces no pat interpretation of the novel. Doubt and uncertainty remain: “Das Ende des Romans verbleibt ebenso rätselhaft wie die anfängliche Frage. [. . .] Die Ohnmacht des Menschen angesichts seines Schicksals wird in diesem Roman deutlich” (98).

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