

Zeitschrift: SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature
Herausgeber: Swiss Association of University Teachers of English
Band: 3 (1987)

Vorwort: Preface
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Preface

This volume contains all but one of the papers read at the 1985 St Gallen symposium on the "Structure of Texts." It includes both the linguistic and the literary contributions presented at the conference, a combination which may seem unusual in these days of specialisation; the open-minded reader may find, however, that there are indeed a number of areas in which the two fields come very close to one another, and that it is sometimes difficult to draw a clear borderline between them. This fact is reflected in the arrangement of the individual essays in this volume, in which no line of demarcation is drawn between the linguistic and the literary papers.

The introductory address, delivered by Nils Erik Enkvist, comes first and is of paramount interest to students of style, be they linguists or literary critics. This is followed by a number of papers with a clearly linguistic background; the growing concern of linguists with questions of discourse and text is apparent in all of these contributions. The next group of papers, dealing with general questions of literature rather than with any particular authors, focus on related fields of interest, and it is no coincidence that their authors quote, among other books and articles, the very works which are referred to in the "text-linguistic" papers. The papers concerned with texts by individual British writers are arranged chronologically; they span a considerable period, beginning with papers on Beowulf and on Chaucer, and moving through Shakespeare to Milton, Swift, Fielding, and Addison. The volume concludes with essays on Melville, American-Indian autobiography, and the postmodernist text. All of these contributions reflect the growing interest in a variety of approaches towards questions of textual structure, which open up new possibilities in the interpretation of English literary and non-literary texts.

Udo Fries