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1 The paper is based on a lecture given at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, and at the Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, in the spring of 1995.

2 Here I would like to express my thanks to the CIES (*Council for the International Exchange of Scholars*) for a research grant for the academic year 1994/95 and the Hall Center and Slavic Department at the Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, for being my hosts.

3 Fokkema, Douwe: The study of literature. In: Zürcher, E. et al. (Eds.): *The Humanities in the Nineties: A View from the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger 1990. pp. 227-256, here p. 243

The purpose of this paper¹ is to point out the different characters of the study of literature in America and Europe. My stay in America² has made it clear to me that European nations, no matter how much they emphasize their individuality, are in fact more similar to each other than they are to America and allow (with the exception of England) some generalizations to be made. I shall take my examples of the European perspective on things from Slovene and German literary studies, which are the two areas with which I am best acquainted. My essay will, in this sense, highlight those points in American and European literary studies where there are disagreements.

In many aspects, these disagreements are based in the dual status of literary studies: the traditional humanistic one, maintained in America, and that of the social studies, introduced in Europe. I am attempting to give the study of literature a status comparable to that of the social sciences, which is impossible as long as we are interested only in the features, characteristic for the individual case. As social scientists, we are supposed to attribute general features to individual phenomena³ in order to form rules. Quantitative and empirical methods should help literary scholarship to move from the humanities to the social sciences. In the second part of the article I will present some results of the quantitative analyses of Slovene fictional prose narrative.

We like to imagine that we live in a world interconnected through communications, in a global village, where everyone has access to all information at all times. In fact, the world is much less interconnected than we would like it to be with respect to the technological possibilities that we have; this is true in particular of the humanities, which, since the Romantic excitement of the 19th century onwards have been confined in their national frameworks and poorly connected among international institutions in comparison with their worldly sister, science. Humanities gain their local status through their primary interest in the local language, literature and history, which are studied *in situ* and are hence called *area studies* or, in more modern terms, *cultural studies* – instead of the old expression *humanities*, which is beginning to disappear from encyclopedia entries. In this »logic of space« we find for example in the world wide web, Slovene linguistics included among East-European Studies, and this is included under the rubric of *Geography*. This hierarchization of disciplines seems to me strange, since at the University of Ljubljana, area studies in this sense are a foreign concept. Students enroll in courses for their national language and literature together, but Slavic, Roman and Germanic linguistics is not subordinated to Slavic, Roman and Germanic studies, in which it would be necessary to know something also about the history, economics, politics and culture of the area in question, but institutionally these are rather included (i.e. in research projects) under the general term »linguistics«. Such an organization of disciplines is the result of greater specialization of European universities; moreover I explain it as an attempt at removing the local barriers of humanities.

The self-contained nature of national humanistic disciplines has done a lot to contribute the terminological incompatibility. European scholars have difficulties from the start in orienting themselves in America since fields in the profession have different names and a different context than the one that is familiar to them. It is in vain to search through the keyword index at an American library to try to find the term »literary science«, frequently used in Europe – this keyword is not there. Instead, we have to search under the keyword *literature*, which combines *belles lettres* and scholarly works on *belles lettres*. There is also the modest key word *literature, -research*, but no general key word for *literature, -theory*; literary theory is found subordinated to the extensive field of *literature, -history and criticism*. More works are found under the key words *German -, Italian -, Slovenian literature, -history and criticism*, that is, the viewpoint prevails that literature and literary scholarship are nationally bounded phenomena and that we are primarily interested in them in the framework of a particular nation. There also exists the general (universal) keyword *criticism*. Under this we find, in addition to books dealing with individual works, also articles on the methodology of literary criticism and certain works of literary theory. The term »literary criticism« in Continental Europe means merely the day-to-day publicistic criticism and is not a part of academic literary scholarship.

The differences between the European and American traditions of writing about literature are easy to detect just by comparing the layout of books – i.e. German and English books. The German books have extensive subtitles, they are part of ambitiously planned series, they have



5 Literary magazines are edited by universities, concert and theater halls, museums and galleries operate within the frameworks of universities.

6 Frye, Northrop: *Literary and Mechanical Models*. In: Hockey Susan/ Ide, Nancy (Eds.): *Research in Humanities and Computing 1*. Oxford: Clarendon 1991.

schoolmate, who is a writer, who asks for a critical assessment of his work, or, when I go with him to speak at a literary evening. I am even so inconsistent as to list my publicistic activities at the end of my otherwise »scientific« bibliography.

In principle I am for a clear distinction between literary study, literary criticism and the practice of creating literature. In my first year course in which I introduce methodology, I convince the freshmen that their study of literature will not prepare them for their entrance into a dedicated literary circle, as they know it from libraries, newspapers, television, theaters and literary evenings, but their work rather belongs to the system of science, which must be distant from its object of study and free of value judgment. Identification with literature and living through it vicariously, which are essential in high school, can be part of their private reading pleasure, but they are not prerequisites for good literary analysis. It seems to me that in America literary studies at the university are more a part of the cultural scene than in Europe⁵ and thus continue the humanistic practice that prevailed until the middle of the 20th century⁶ and in which literary criticism was a kind of service activity in the field of literature or was in the service of various ideological practices.

The traditional connection between literary criticism and literary research is the cause of difficulties for the categorization of literary studies. For my own, let's say it immodestly, empirical literary-scholarly endeavor, in America I simply cannot find an appropriate category. Among the scientific disciplines, literary studies don't exist and I am amazed to discover them in the arts, which is associated with the structural and functional identity of literature and writing about literature – this is as if linguistics were not distinguished from language. I would like to place my literary study among the social sciences, where part of archeology, history, linguistics, philosophy and women's studies have already seceded – I would expect it somewhere in the vicinity of communication studies, informatics and library sciences, but for literary science there is still no place. The journal *Poetics*, which is an exponent of empirical methods in the field of literary studies, isn't even listed in any of the existing citation indexes.

A few years ago I lectured on a particular chapter of literary studies, which in Slovene is labeled by the key word *trivialna literatura* and in German *Trivilliteratur*. In the lecture, which was in English, I was forced to use the word in its original language, since the standard English translation, »popular literature«, complicates things: popular literature in Europe is something different than *trivialna literatura* – it is only one type of *trivialna literatura*, that is, the kind of writing for simple folk that is indifferent to the edification of the reader and which prefers sensational motifs.

I have worked also on the frequently used genre of the Slovene rural story (*kmečka povest*, Germ. *Dorfgeschichte*), which, appropriate to its frequency, has an established genre label under which we find in libraries overseas an abundance of secondary literature. This is not the case in English: the rural story, as I translated the title of my book, does not exist in American libraries as a key word. When I went to look up the key word under which my book was in fact filed, I found the term pastoral literature, which could not be used for one of the most common genres of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe. Similarly, the German secondary literature is found under the labels »peasants in literature« and »farm life in literature«, which indicates the instability of terminology for one of the most hearty genres of European literature. On the other hand, we would have no idea how to translate the intrinsically American term »frontier novel«.

Another example of translation difficulties: the term »ženski roman« (Germ. *Frauenroman*) for the bourgeois 19th century genre that has a women as the main character; Velemir Gjurin came up with the original translation the »petticoat novel«, since he could not find an English equivalent.

These and similar translational and classificational difficulties prove that connections and influences between national literatures are not quite as strong as we would like them to be in the name of a unified Western Civilization. Literary activity in the Slavic field i.e. is simply unknown – let us examine the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index* (AHCi) and *Social Sciences Citation Index* (SSCI), which are considered to be universal bibliographic institutions, are nevertheless expressly Anglocentric: 63% of the entries are from North America, Western Europe is represented by 24%, Eastern Europe by 3%⁷; and the Slavic literatures are covered by a mere 7 journals. Considering the fact that from some journals even minor editorial notes are registered here, it is plain sloppy that a major part of the world remains bibliographically unknown. The only Slovene authors that are mentioned are those that are published in English or German journals and address a non-Slovene audience. Journal with articles on Slovene language and literature are un-

7 Langendorff, Ton: Support for the humanities: Some international statistics. *The Humanities in the Nineties*. In: E. Zürcher et al. 1990. pp. 16-21.

8 Fokkema 1990.

9 Denley, Peter: The computer revolution and »redefining the Humanities.« In: Miall, David S. (Ed.): *Humanities and the Computer: New Directions*. Oxford: Clarendon Pr. 1990, pp. 13-25.

known. Thus it is a grotesque situation when a Slovene ministry of science places a condition on the amount of the subsidy for a Slovene journal of literary research, linked to its appearance in AHCI, even though AHCI does not distinguish between everyday publicistic literary criticism and articles belonging strictly in the framework of professional literary scholarship. I do not know any official reasons for the discriminatory stance of AHCI; however, I have a hunch that in addition to the unpleasant feel and poor quality of East European printing, by and large the ideological bases of East European Slavic studies were at fault. Today the majority of American humanistic writing is feminist, Marxist, or ideologized in one way or another, while the East doesn't want to hear about Marxism any more; nevertheless, cultural ignorance, exclusivism and self-satisfaction in the humanities, to judge from the AHCI list of so-called »relevant« journals, are not much different than in the time of the iron curtain.

To some extent it is understandable that, because of institutional and methodological distance, literary scholars, psychologists and computer experts do not know each other, even if they are dealing with the same subject. It is more difficult to understand why humanists fail to know each other just because they speak different languages. The main reason for cultural isolation and lack of communication in the humanities is really the banal ignorance of languages and loose ties among international institutions in the humanities. In the English-speaking world the important foreign-language writers are discovered decades later – we need to think only of the fate of the Russian formalists, Roman Ingarden, György Lukács, Jan Mukařovský. And, to make the irony of anachronism still greater: the most popular are the ones whom their translators did not understand or whose cultural and social contexts were ignored, as in the case of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger.⁸

The humanities in America do not have the status of science, in fact, they are its opposite. With respect to the rival social sciences, the humanities are in an unenviable defensive position: governments curtail their financial support and the humanities must prove every step of the way that they are not merely fulfilling their own purposes, but are socially useful and necessary. It is easiest to defend them with the application of their knowledge in the educational system, which, however, significantly narrows its range. Among the public the humanities are »the branches of learning, regarded as having primarily a cultural character«, »learning or literature concerned with human culture«, »polite scholarship« (the definitions are from various dictionaries), in which are included, with equal weight, literary and artistic creativity and the study of literature and art – all with the goal of developing »good taste«. The humanist is thus a sort of witty, cultural educated entertainer and writer of popular books, having little in common with science and objective discovery. From this perspective, empirical, objective studies of cultural phenomena are accused of »ensconcing themselves in ivory towers« of knowledge for knowledge's sake.⁹ The non-scientific role of the humanist is also part of the Slovene popular conscience, may he be a protector and popularizer of cultural values, a cultural authority, a judge (*arbiter*) of cultural matters. Nevertheless, I have the feeling (what a typically inexact humanistic formulation!) that the popular expectation of a literary scholar in Slovenia is not as strongly binding and defining of his position as it is in America. The hybrid nature of humanities or culturology in Slovenia just described is beautifully illustrated by the three ministries that financially support them: the ministry of education (*ministrstvo za šolstvo*), science (*ministrstvo za znanost*), and culture (*ministrstvo za kulturo*).

Quantitative analyses of Slovene fictional prose narrative

Quantitative methods should help literary scholarship to move from the humanities to the social sciences. If the prediction of the German literary theoretician Siegfried J. Schmidt is valid (1992), literary scholarship in the 1990s will be a part of empirical cultural studies, or it will be completely marginalized. Contemporary literary studies cannot be considered science – as a belong to the national (literary) histories they are too directly attached to the national representative mechanisms. To this end it is necessary to surrender the firmly established normative concept that is a generator of unscientific value judgments about literature. As long as literary studies are a part of the traditional humanities, which are part of the national culture, they are responsible for creating a national literary canon and affirming the national specificity and identity; this limits their scope and their objectivity. Empirical literary studies do not mean the rejection of research on individual literatures and their nation-specific functions – on the contrary: they especially indicate the specific dimensions of the literary system. The distinction from the

10 Scherber, Peter: Slovar Prešernovega pesniškega jezika. Maribor: Obzorja 1977; Poniž, Denis: Numerične estetike in slovenska literarna znanost. Maribor: Obzorja 1982 (Znamenja 67).

11 Suhadolnik, Stane/ Janežič, Marija: Plasti in pogostnost leksike. In: Jezik in slovstvo 8 (1962/63), pp. 45-49, pp. 73-79; Suhadolnik, Stane: Frekvenca analiza besedišča v Cvetju v jeseni. In: Slavistična revija 22 (1974), pp. 31-40.

12 Zupan, Jure: Lahko računalnik prebira pesnike in ugotavlja njihov slog? In: Delo – Književni listi July 21, 1994, pp. 13-15.

13 Hladnik, Miran: Povest. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije 1991 (Literarni leksikon 36); Hladnik, M.: Slovenska kmečka povest. Ljubljana: Prešernova družba 1990; Hladnik, M.: Slovenska zgodovinska povest v 19. stoletju. In: Seminar slovenskega jezika, literature in kulture 30. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta 1994, pp. 127-153.

humanities is that the sense and goal of empirical literary studies is not their active participation in the national cultural scene, but in the international scientific scene. Instead of the humanistic relationships of literary scholarship with its object, literature, the relationships between literary scholarship and other sciences are foregrounded. For now only measurable entities in literature are ripe for empirical analysis, however, the development of cognitive science – especially artificial intelligence – and methods in the social sciences promise the possibility of analyzing non-quantitative entities in the future.

How is Slovene literature of use to empirical literary scholarship? Its advantage is in its small size, which makes it more possible to circumscribe. One of the basic features of traditional research in the humanities is the manipulation of incomplete and unsystematically collected data, since complete data, given limited institutional resources, are difficult to collect. Slovene literature has for the researcher the virtue that all the texts of a given genre corpus can be counted fully, even if one person is doing the counting by hand. The data received in this way are similar to the kind of data found in the natural sciences. To give an example, let us take the description of how biologists discover how many mice live in a given space. At night they set traps and in the morning collect their quarry; then they set the traps again. They repeat this until no more mice are caught. They then count their catch and write up the result of a study. I have done something similar with the genre of the Slovene historical novel and the genre of the rural story: I went through catalogues and bibliographies, critical works and literary histories until I ran out of works to find. Thus it was necessary only to remove from this corpus of texts the works that did not fit the criteria. This closed list can now be quantified in any way, depending how much time one has to do the analysis and what importance the results of the analysis promise to have. I think, therefore, that Slovene literature has, because of its quantitative circumscribability, a kind of laboratory value for similar studies on other, larger literatures.

Quantification in linguistics and literary scholarship is usually associated with the development of computer science, which facilitates the crunching of large quantities of data. The computer has indeed inspired many such studies, but, at least for the first steps in Slovene quantitative stylistics in the beginning of the 1960s computers were not the culprits. Until the 1970s and 1980s¹¹ words and sentences were counted by hand¹¹; Slovene computer scientists and linguists have been publishing jointly from 1985 on in the periodical *Computer Processing of Language Data*. Stylistic analyses have taken into consideration Slovene literary authors, but it would be impossible to call them part of literary scholarship, as these were done mostly by linguists, from a linguistic viewpoint and largely belong in linguistics – with the exception of authorship analysis, where the analysis of language serves the literary scholar's interest in the author.¹²

Marketing research for the book trade has taken up an empirical approach to researching the literary system with analyses of readership and readers' interests and habits; nevertheless, all Slovene writing about literature, publicistic and academic, has been of an expressly hermeneutic nature. Primarily the sociological and psychological dimensions of the literary system are open to empirical study. Since they have the appropriate tools and methods, sociologists are in a position to analyze book production, distribution, and consumption, i.e. authors and publishing houses, the book trade, buying and reading; psychologists are in a position to analyze reading. In the framework of academic literary scholarship, both literary theory and literary history are open to quantitative studies. Once the primary goal of literary scholarship ceases to be the creation of a national canon, that is, the selection of the »eternal« from the »ephemeral«, the literary scholar is no longer constrained to deal only with individual works of high aesthetic quality. Today we can quantify, categorize, and analyze large corpuses of literary texts, literary criticism (which is a document of a past reading), and other elements of the literary system without being limited by any sort of aesthetic selectivity.

This is the direction in which my own work is going.¹³ Quantification – traditionally an exceedingly banal activity in the humanities, usually accompanied by an ironic grin – occasionally destroys the synoptic, school definitions or, at least, relativizes them. Let me report on some results of my quantitative studies of Slovene fictional prose narrative.

A quantitative analysis of the subtitles of Slovene fictional prose narrative and a measurement of the length of texts have helped me to specify theoretically the competing expression story (Slov. *povest*), novel (*roman*) and novella (*novela*). It turns out that the appellative habits have changed so much through time that attempts at atemporal, »gnomic«, general literary theoretical definitions make no sense and merely give rise to normative poetological constructs.

Each national literature develops its own, specific nomenclature for its literary theory to fit its unique national literary system. Thus, for example, German literary scholarship worries about the distinction between the novella (Germ. *Novelle*) and the story (*Erzählung*), whereas Slovene scholarship is concerned with the complex relationship between the story and the novel. In the 19th century the standard label for lengthier fictional narrative works was the story (*povest*); after 1950 the standard label was the novel (*roman*). In the area of shorter fictional prose narratives the expression story (*povest*) competed with the terms picture (*slika*), sketch (*črtica*), tale (*zgodba*) and novella (*novela*).

A quantification of subtitles has shown that the awareness of the genre is in direct proportion to the length of the text: the longer the text, the greater the likelihood that the subtitle will include an indication of genre. A second rule: subtitles were more common in the 19th than in the 20th century. The interpretation of this fact: the awareness of genre gets gradually lost. The measurement of the length of texts has allowed us to make the following assertions: 1) Published texts are becoming longer. 2) In the 19th century the problematic genre, the story, competes with respect to length with the novella; in the 20th century (since its length has increased) it competes with the novel. 3) With respect to length, the best defined genre is the rarely used novella (nearly all are in the narrow range of between 20 000 and 45 000 words); the least well defined is the story, which is found in all length categories.

Without considering the entire corpus of national fictional prose narrative it would be impossible to determine the relationship between individual genres. I compared the rural and historical long narrative. Although these corpuses are in terms of their quantity very similar in the 19th century (45 texts each), there are interesting differences between them. The production of the historical novel was continually moderate, whereas the rural novel was an explosive genre. The historical novel is also moderate and more predictable in terms of length, whereas the length of the rural novel vacillates considerably over time. The methodological consequence of the measurement is the realization that the categorizational questions are relativized to the historical time and space, in such a way that they can be considered part of national literary history. Quantitative methods return literary history to the leading place in literary scholarship, i.e. they affirm literary history as the paradigm of literary scholarship.

The production of literary works is to a great extent dependent upon political, cultural and historical circumstances. In the past the most productive areas were those in which the Slovene population was greater than that of the Germans, Italians or Hungarians within the multinational Habsburg Monarchy. The First and Second World Wars had expressly negative effects on literary productivity. Wars influence both the message and tone of literature. Before a war the ends of stories and novels are negative warnings; during a war and after it they are programmatically optimistic and encouraging. A very common motif is the cripple in the literature of western Slovenia after 1918, just as it was one of the consequences of the World War; together with other indices, it suggests a political interpretation: western Slovenia, that is, about one-third of the Slovene ethnic territory, belonged to Italy after the First World War – thus, the motif of the cripple is a symbol of the »crippled« nation.

Douwe Fokkema (1990) ascribes to literature an exceptionally serious and important role in our civilization. Literature is a kind of laboratory for the search for alternative answers to life's problems. It offers a repertoire of alternative solutions that, because of their aesthetic conventions, i.e., because of their fictional nature, are not directly binding; however, they help us to make thoughtful decisions in private and public life. Slovene literature gives an abundance of arguments to this thesis. In an extensive corpus of texts I noted the motif of love between partners of different classes and discovered that the rare successful marriages between classes come only at times critical for national survival, such as during the First and Second World Wars. I interpret this fact as the need for consolidation of the national body, which can occur only when those antagonistic classes that diffuse the national energies at critical moments and lower its possibility of national survival are united.

The fact is amusing that in love triangles in Slovene fiction there prevails a configuration of two men to one woman over the configuration of two women to one man. Since I also counted an equal number of instances where a man or woman chooses between two romantic offers, the difference is due to the monopoly in the rivalry that men have in a love triangle; in other words: women fight for their partner only rarely, whereas the man does so regularly.



Conclusion

With quantitative (statistical, empirical) studies, literary scholarship is becoming methodologically similar to the social sciences, but not identical to them. Science normally searches for unequivocal answers to questions, whereas the humanities are satisfied and even find singularly appropriate if the questions merely open or, ideally, make apparent several alternative answers. Exact methods in literary scholarship are no threat to the activity of interpretation. Quantification itself, however, gives interesting results which, because of their complex nature, i.e. the relative unquantifiability of the literary system, are only a reliable basis for provocative, speculative, in short, typically humanistic interpretations.

(English by Marc L. Greenberg)



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