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## Theory and Method in Literary Studies

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Henryk Markiewicz (Poland)

## THEORY AND METHOD IN LITERARY STUDIES

A scholar who appreciates order and accuracy will be upset by the profusion, as well as the ambiguity and interference, of notions and terms relating to the theoretical branch of the science of literature.<sup>1</sup> Even poetics and rhetoric, both descended from the Aristotelian tradition, combined normative with descriptive aims, overlapped each other by their scopes (think of the theory of tropes and figures), let alone the boundaries of their subject-matter: at first poetry, then literature, that used to change and were mostly floating. The involved situation was further complicated by the term “stylistics” that appeared in at first towards the end of the 18th century in Germany (Novalis, among others) and subsequently, from the mid-19th century onwards, in France as well. Wilhelm Wackernagel (*Poetik, Rhetorik und Stilistik*, written in 1836, published in 1871) attributed the study of the nature and types of poetry, to poetics; the study of prose types, to rhetoric; and the study of the linguistic formation of poetry and prose alike, to stylistics.

However, in the 19th century and later the subject-matter of poetics continued to widen and comprised eventually the whole body of literature, including its prose genres; along with that poetics was being stripped, at least declaratorily, of its normative functions, as it was tagged to be “scientific”. Its scope continued to widen, too, to include psychology of literary creation (Wilhelm Dilthey, *Die Einbildungskraft des Dichters, Bausteine zu einer Poetik*, 1889), and perception (Richard Müller-Freienfels, *Poetik*, 1914; consequently led Kazimierz Wóycicki drew in his 1914 *Historia literatury i poetyka* a distinction between psychological poetics and objective poetics, with the latter of the two treating the literary work as an “aesthetic verbal expression”); and further also aesthetic categories, the typology of literature along trends and lines, and the issue of evaluation (Rudolf Lehmann’s 1908 *Poetik* is a case in point). Eventu-

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<sup>1</sup> A nice review of the situation in German literary science was given by C. F. Köpp, *Literaturwissenschaft, Literaturwissenschaftstheorie. Forschungssystematik und Fachsprache*, Berlin (DDR), 1980.

ally, in most recent times, poetics has come to be applied to non-literary texts (Maria Renata Mayenowa, *O perspektywach poetyki inaczej*, 1984; Michał Głowiński, "Poetyka wobec tekstów nieliterackich," in: *Poetyka i okolice*, 1992).

Alongside traditional poetics appeared a "historical poetics", initiated by Aleksandr Veselovskii, purporting to trace back the development of language and style, and of literary genres and motifs; properly it belonged in the general history of literature. In this connection emerged in Russian scholarship the notion of a "general or theoretical poetics", its objective being to provide "systematic comparative description and classification of poetic devices" (Victor Zhirmunskii, *Zadachi poetiki*, 1923), or, as Roman Jakobson put it (*Linguistics and Poetics*, 1960), of *differentia specifica* of verbal art, or, more broadly, the study of specific features, structures and morphology of literary works. That poetics is sometimes called "descriptive poetics," probably in analogy to "descriptive grammar." Mayenowa did so in her 1949 textbook, yet for the title of a later work she preferred *Poetyka teoretyczna* (1974). An extreme version of general or theoretical poetics was put forward by Zygmunt Łempicki, with his idea of "pure poetics" ("W sprawie uzasadnienia poetyki czystej," *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, 1920) as discussing ideal categories of presentation (form, object, plot, content), their formal objective categories (unity, diversity, symmetry, proportion), and rules of their "compounding" (combination).

The term "poetics" is also used in the meaning of what is called "particular poetics," the analysis of the structure of an individual literary work or of a historical group of works in terms of their artistic values (M.L. Gasparov's entry *Poetika* in: *Literaturnyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar*, 1987). Occasionally indeed, the rules themselves of this structure are sometimes defined as poetics. It was in this sense that Bruno Markwardt ("Das Verhältnis von formulierter und werkimmanenter Poetik," in: *Poetics, Poetyka, Poetika*, 1961) introduced the term "immanent poetics" as distinct from "formulated poetics." In the 1970s, German theory come forward with the term "Poetologie," with its use in practice somewhat chaotic, sometimes referring to poetics formulated by the authors themselves, or, conversely, to descriptive as distinct from normative poetics.

In the late 18th century, the term "theory of poetry" appeared in titles of German textbooks (Christoph Martin Wieland, 1757; Christian Martin Schmid, 1767; Johann Jacob Engel, 1783). In Poland, Euzebiusz Słowacki used the term (before 1813, published 1826). Jan Rymarkiewicz, in an introduction to the third edition of *Prozaika czyli stylistyka prozy* (1868) described "the science called literature" (sic) as consisting of history of literature and theory of literature, "the science of the form of works of literary art."<sup>2</sup> Earlier

<sup>2</sup> J. Rymarkiewicz, *Prozaika czyli stylistyka prozy*, 3rd ed., Poznań, 1868.

use of the term “theory of literature” been found nowhere else. Early on in the 20th century it reappeared in titles of Polish books by Bronisław Grabowski (1901), Władysław Kokowski (1902) and Henryk Galle (1908).

In Russian literature of the time, you may come across the term “teoria slovesnosti” (Aleksandr Potebnia, *Iz zapisok po teorii slovesnosti*, 1905). *Teoria literatury* appeared on the cover of Boris Tomashevskii’s 1925 textbook, the work that, going as it did through six editions in Russia and translated into Polish in 1935, actually gave the term wide circulation. Not unlikely, René Wellek may have borrowed the term from Tomashevskii, to use it then as co-author of the 1949 *Theory of Literature*, a book that was translated into many languages and so gave the term worldwide popularity. Wellek defined theory of literature as the study of principles, categories and criteria basic for literary phenomena, as opposed to the study of concrete literary works, divided into literary criticism and history of literature. In the 1980s, “theory of literature” was accepted even by French authors, who were known for their reluctance to adopt imported literary terms longer than others; the compendiums *Théorie de la littérature* edited by A. Kibédi Varga (1981) or *Théorie littéraire* edited by Marc Angenot *et al.* (1989) provide evidence of that.

The term “theory of literature” faced challenges from “science of literature” (H.C. Muller, 1898), “science de la littérature” (Michel Dragomirescou, 1928; Guy Michaud, 1950), or “die Wissenschaft von der Dichtung” (Julius Petersen, 1939), yet none of those were any notable success. The only term to gain any wider popularity, in Germany, was perhaps “allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft” (Rudolf Petsch, 1934, Max Wehrli, 1951).<sup>3</sup>

Authors took different approaches to the question of relations between theoretical poetics and theory of literature. Some authors, while recognizing the existence of the term and concept of “theory of literature”, held that the same meaning was adequately expressed by “poetics” and preferred to employ this last-named term in discussions, say, of the systematics of the science of literature (Wehrli). Others used both terms interchangeably. Wóycicki did so in his *Historia literatury i poetyka*. It was probably in that sense that Tomashevskii used it in the subtitle to his *Teoria literatury*, and, conversely, the words “theory of artistic literature” appeared in the subtitle of a synopsis of Roman Ingarden’s lectures on poetics in Lvov in 1940-41. Similarly, Erwin Leibfried (*Kritische Wissenschaft vom Text*, 1970) viewed poetics as equivalent to „allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft.” Other authors considered the theory of literature to be a broader notion than poetics, since its scope covered

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<sup>3</sup> The term was probably coined by R. Petsch, “Was heißt ‘Allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft’” (*Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 1934), who used it to denote „a national science of literature” with interpretive tasks. The term „Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft” was used before though, at the end of the 19th century.

also some general statements referring to ontology, functions and values of literature and to theory of literary process (for example, Janusz Sławiński's entry "Teoria literatury" in: *Słownik terminów literaturoznawczych*, 1976). On the other hand, Stanisław Balbus viewed poetics and theory of literature as distinct from, yet linked with, each other by a feedback relation ("Granice poetyki i kompetencje teorii literatury," in a collection of studies *Poetyka bez granic*, 1995). Balbus drew another distinction, between poetics and systematic rhetoric, the latter investigating literary forms, figures and devices. The tasks of poetics are here limited to "epistemological competences of different theoretical-literary methods and views."<sup>4</sup>

The situation got even more complicated with the appearance of terms such as "aesthetics of literature" or "philosophy of literature." They turned up mostly in studies on aesthetics or philosophy of art in relation to literary phenomena. A discussion of those notions would go beyond the limits of this article, suffice it to say that such headings covered topics such as the nature and peculiarities of literary work, its values and aesthetic perception. In his systematics of "knowledge of literature" Roman Ingarden devoted some attention to the philosophy of literature, including in it the ontology of literary work, theory of its cognition, theory of literary creation and of literary aesthetic experience, even sociology of literature. Ingarden drew a clear line between philosophy of literature and science of literature, poetics included. To illustrate that distinction, he pointed out that in detecting the content of the idea of work of literary art, generally or in its different forms, ontology of artistic literature does not go beyond establishing the *potentialities* of literature, rather than examining, as does poetics, general structures, properties and realities of *actually* existing literary works. Poetics thus is not part of the ontology of literature, even though its theoretical fundamentals are deeply rooted in it.<sup>5</sup>

Finally theory of literature won the battle against poetics as the broader of the two terms, since poetics is usually considered to have the literary work only, its forms and clusters, as its object. However, can studies that are subsumed under one family of "theory of literature" satisfy requirements that are put to what is called "theory"? Theory is as a rule required to be systematic, to provide a high level of generality and conditionality (predicating relations and links), yet each of those criteria is seen in different ways.<sup>6</sup> Formal systematiza-

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<sup>4</sup> Recent American proposals, which challenge the theoretical character of poetics by taking it close towards interpretation, and indeed go beyond limits of the identity of poetics placing it in different contexts such as "poetics of culture" or "poetics of sex," are omitted here. See A. Burzyńska, "Poetyka po strukturalizmie," in a collection *Poetyka bez granic*, Warszawa, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See R. Ingarden, „Über Poetik“ in: *Gegenstand und Aufgaben der Literaturwissenschaft*, ausgewählt und eingeleitet von R. Fieguth, Tübingen, 1976, pp. 33-38.

<sup>6</sup> See P. Sztompka, *Teoria i wyjaśnianie*, Warszawa, 1973, p. 63.

tion, i. e. establishment of logical connections between all statements, is never fully achieved by theory of literature; the last-named theory does satisfy, however, the requirement of semantic systematization, due to the unity of its field of reference and the unity of its basic conceptual structure. Generality is most easy to reduce to the class of phenomena that are not limited by space-time, a procedure that cannot possibly apply to the humanities. In human sciences, it is more proper to talk of an open class of phenomena, or of a class of phenomena contained in specific segments of time-space (in relation to literature, one is tempted to talk of "time-language" or "time-nation" segments). Accordingly, propositions such as one about realism as a 19th-century literary current would not merit general proposition status; whereas propositions referring to novel, narrator, or realism as a type of literary activity occurring in different times and languages would. In theory of literature, the idea of causal (deterministic) laws was dropped long ago; theory of the literary process is perhaps the only area where you may still find probabilistic propositions or correlation laws. Poetics contains structural laws (laws predicting the co-existence in an object of specific features or components). Such laws are grounds for formulating definitions in the strict sense, i. e., those defining an object by identifying its constitutive features, as well as syndromatic definitions (Stefan Nowak's term), i. e., definitions comprising not only the object's constitutive features, but also their interrelations, other qualities of the object, and sometimes features beyond its scope too (comprising what is called an object's full meaning). Stefan Nowak's observation, "Many scientific studies end up [...], with rewording definitions used at the outset of the research, and replacing the constitutive content with meanings more complete and of syndromatic character,"<sup>7</sup> fully holds for theory of literature.

Further, let it be observed that the theoretical status of theory of literature, and in particular of poetics, can be justified in a different way, too, namely by pointing out that it is not a nomological science (one that formulates laws) but a typological science, one systematizing the entire body of literary phenomena and identifying different transhistorical forms in which they occur.<sup>8</sup>

However, literary theory's status of theory is encumbered by three circumstances. First, literary theory not infrequently employs ambiguous, blurred, or familiar (in Wittgenstein's sense) terms. Second, in actual practice poetics tends to overstep the borderline of requisite generality, turning into historical systematics, especially in its textbook approach to genology. Third, some important components of theory, to name but the theory of literary proc-

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<sup>7</sup> S. Nowak, *Metodologia badań społecznych*, Warszawa, 1985, p. 149.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. W. Tatariewicz, „Nauki nomologiczne a typologiczne,” in: *Skupienie i marzenie*, Kraków, 1951, pp. 174-177.

ess, are underdeveloped and exist in fragmentary, if not aphoristic, form only, rather than in a form of systematic presentation. Occasionally they are so platitudinous and/or vague as to be even hard to falsify.

Theory status is also attributed to methodology of literary research, another line of literary scientific reflection characterized by generality and a systematic character. (We find here one more connotation of the term “theory”, one contrasting it with practice.) The term was used by August Boeckh in the title of his posthumous lecture series *Vorlesungen über Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* of 1877. Vassilii Ostrin used it in his book *Opyt metodologicheskogo vvedenia v istoriu russkoi literatury XIX veka* in 1907. Lehmann’s *Poetik* (1908) contains a chapter called “Poetik als Methodenlehre.” Other books to mention in this connection include: Vladimir Perets’s *Lekcii po metodologii istorii russkoi literatury* (1914); Horst Oppel’s *Methodenlehre der Literaturwissenschaft* (in the collection *Deutsche Philologie im Aufriß*, I. 1951); Alexei Bushmin’s *Metodologicheskie voprosy literaturnykh issledovanii* (1969); Joseph Strelka’s *Methodologie der Literaturwissenschaft* (1978); or Chantal Labre and Patrice Soler’s *Méthodologie littéraire* (1995).

“Methodology” is rather a rare term in titles of books dealing with science of literature, yet studies concerning method and methodology of literary studies began to appear towards the end of the 19th century and many authors committed themselves to such studies at that time, still in the epoch of positivism. A few examples are Aleksandr Vesolovskii’s *O metodach i zadachakh istorii literatury kak nauki* (1870); Georges Renard’s *La méthode scientifique de l’histoire littéraire* (1900); Piotr Chmielowski’s 1899 *Metodyka historii literatury polskiej* (which discussed the study as well as the teaching of that subject though); or Tadeusz Grabowski’s *Metodyka historii literatury* (1907). Widely known was Gustave Lanson’s *La méthode littéraire* (1911). Another well-known study was Boris Eikhenbaum’s *Teoria “formalnogo metoda”* (1926). Gabriel Korbut in his introduction *Wstęp do literatury polskiej* (1924) was the first author in Poland to declare that the science of literature covered theory of literature (i.e., stylistics as well as poetics), history of literature and methodology of literary studies. However, many attempts to systematize the science of literature ignored the methodology of literary studies. So did Ingarden, Wellek and Warren, or Wehrli. Ingarden remarked in 1935 that with different epistemological issues yet unresolved “any methodological discourse aiming at building an infallible method of literary study is by far premature at the present state of things.”<sup>9</sup> Juliusz Kleiner at first made no mention of methodology to his *Studia z teorii literatury* he avowed his former intention to write a “methodology and methodics of literary study comprising theory of

<sup>9</sup> R. Ingarden, „Formy poznawania dzieła literackiego”, *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 33 (1936), No. 1, p. 198.

literature.” So he considered methodology to be a discipline clearly superior to theory of literature, certainly an isolated view at his time.

A glance across the above-mentioned titles shows that the terms used there should be put in some order for the purpose of further discussion. Thus, let us use *method* in its common meaning of systematic application of certain research rules and correct reasoning rules in relation to its results (This definition tallies partly with Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz’s distinction between “pragmatic” and “apragmatic” methodology<sup>10</sup>.) By methodics, let us denote any formulated method, a systematic presentation of the above-mentioned rules (based on previous practices, one’s own or other people’s, or only projected *pro futuro*). Lastly, I propose to use the term *methodology* as denoting the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of method or methodics. Thus, in writing his essay on “German and English Romanticism” René Wellek was using a certain method; in his essay called “Literary Theory, Criticism and Theory”, he formulated principles of his methodics; and he practiced methodology in “The Literary Theory and Aesthetics of the Prague School”.

It is easily seen that the place of methodics and methodology in the science of literature is doubtful, because, strictly, they are parts of its metascience. However, it is possible to follow Stanisław Dąbrowski’s proposal to build a scientific universe comprising both disciplines and call it the science of literature in the broad sense, or macrosience of literature.<sup>11</sup>

The status of methodics of literary studies is liable to challenge from another angle, by contesting the validity of applying any method at all in that field, or anyway in some of its areas. Emil Staiger, e. g., contended that interpretation itself is an art, based “on immediate intuition of the work’s stylistic unity.”<sup>12</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer held the humanistic experience reflects a truth that is unverifiable by science’s proper systematic method.<sup>13</sup> To E. D. Hirsch, “every interpretation begins and ends up a guess, and no one has devised a method for making intelligent guesses.”<sup>14</sup> Recently, Richard Rorty has approved of an “inspired criticism” as opposed to the “methodical” interpretation of texts.<sup>15</sup>

More such pronouncements can be quoted. In most cases, however, their meaning is modified and restricted by the context in which we are told, for

<sup>10</sup> K. Ajdukiewicz, *Logika pragmatyczna*, Warszawa, 1965, pp. 175-177.

<sup>11</sup> S. Dąbrowski, „Fakt i problem metaliteraturoznawstwa,” *Pamiętnik Literacki* 87 (1996), No. 2. The same was done earlier by A. Bushmin (op.cit., p. 20), who proposed the term “general science of literature” for science including both theory of literature and the theory (or methodology) of the science of literature.

<sup>12</sup> E. Staiger, *Die Kunst der Interpretation*, Zürich, 1955, p.13.

<sup>13</sup> H. D. Gadamer, *Prawda i metoda*, translated into Polish by B. Baran, Kraków, 1993, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, New Haven, 1967, p. 170.

<sup>15</sup> R. Rorty, „Kariera pragmatysty,” in: U. Eco, *Interpretacja i nadinterpretacja*, 1992, Kraków, 1996, p. 105.



example, of first intuitions being verified by subsequent methodical procedure, or about rules of humanistic cognition, rules that, albeit specific, are ultimately rules, and they are non-methodic only in that they diverge from cognitive rules of natural science.

But then, one realizes, neither methodics nor methodology in the strict sense seek to define the object of literary studies or tasks such studies should perform. Methodics depends on what was determined before as the scope of literature, and on what has been accepted as tasks of literary studies; whether such studies should seek to describe "literariness" alone or for the entire semantic contents of literature, or whether it should examine literature in isolation or in connection with other domains of the humanistic reality, and so on.<sup>16</sup>

So what is needed here is another term, one with a semantics than broader "methodics" or "methodology." *An Introduction to the science of literature* (William Henry Bruford, 1909; Tadeusz Grabowski, 1927) implies a propedeutic character of the discipline. The term "philosophy of the science of literature," which appeared in the title of a collective volume edited by Emil Ermatinger in 1930 (*Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft*), seemed inadequate and as such was never accepted. The term "theory of literary studies," which comprises not only methodics and methodology but also definitions (reporting or projecting) of the subject and tasks of the science of literature, seems quite convenient. Manfred Kridl introduced it in 1936 in his *Wstęp do badań nad dziełem literackim*. The present author used it in 1960 publishing the anthology on the theory of literary studies in Poland (*Teoria badań literackich w Polsce*). In the 1970s, an analogous term, "Theorie der Literaturwissenschaft," gained ground in Germany (Siegfried J. Schmidt, Norbert Mecklenburg, Claus Friedrich Köpp, and others).<sup>17</sup>

The term "critical theory" is current in America, used in the sense of theory of literary criticism. Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels in their well-known essay "Against Theory" (1982) labeled "the attempt to govern interpretation of particular texts by appealing to an account of interpretation in general" as "critical theory" or merely "theory" without a predicate, deliberately ignoring such areas as narratology, stylistics, or prosody, which are sometimes subsumed under "theory."<sup>18</sup> Donald G. Marshall introducing his

<sup>16</sup> This issue was discussed by S. Skwarczyńska, „Wokół relacji: przedmiot badań literackich a ich metodologia,” in: *Pomiędzy historią a teorią literatury*, Warszawa, 1975. Cf. also S. Dąbrowski, „Nauki o literaturze i ich metody”, *Ruch Literacki*, 17 (1976), No. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Also, Jerzy Topolski published two books on the same issues with the same titles: *Metodologia historii* (1968) and *Teoria wiedzy historycznej* (1983). Next to pragmatic and apragmatic methodology Topolski distinguished objective methodology as a discipline dealing with the object of historical studies, i.e., the historical process itself, in other words, theory of history.

<sup>18</sup> S. Knapp, W.B. Michaels, „Against Theory”, in: *Against Theory*, ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell, Chicago - London, 1983, p. 11.

bibliography *Contemporary Critical Theory* (1993) defines that “critical theory” as a “self-consciously reflexive awareness of the methods and implications for critical commentary and of its relation to other academic disciplines and, more generally, to culture”.<sup>19</sup> “Critical theory” is also used in several other meanings too. The term “theory of criticism” Raman Selden used in the title of his book (1988) leaves no room for ambiguity.

If you look closely at texts regarded as presentations of method, you will notice most of those texts only indicated topics and issues of proposed studies and drafted the most general theoretical hypotheses regarding those topics and issues. One consequence was that either the methodology (in our terminology, methodics) of literary studies was carelessly equated with theory of literature (Julius Petersen, in *Die Wissenschaft von der Dichtung*, 1939); or both were treated together (Wellek and Warren thought their book should properly be titled “theory of literature and methodology of literary study”; similarly, the present author’s book on the main issues of the knowledge of literature, *Główne problemy wiedzy o literaturze*, 1965); or the term “method” was used to discuss basic issues in theory of literature in their directive functions vis a vis historical and critical practices, that is, precisely the non-methodical part of the theory of literary studies. Sometimes those were the merely applications of theories borrowed from other disciplines, such as psychoanalysis or Marxism, to literary phenomena. (“Theory,” or even “literary theory,” are terms likely to be used in the above meaning in American studies.) Method, in that case, amounted to a recommendation to follow those hypotheses, that is to say, to seek their realizations in specific literary materials.<sup>20</sup>

So, Viktor Žmegač did have a point when writing in introduction to his anthology, „The idea that it makes any sense at all to talk of method in the strict sense of the word in relation to a majority of thoughts, contentions or desiderata contained in those texts is very challengeable. To a wide extent, that notion is used to proffer opinions, programs or ideological solutions.”<sup>21</sup>

More recently, Harald Fricke was even more outspoken, “I am increasingly persuaded to the view that no such thing as a method [of literary studies]

<sup>19</sup> D. G. Marshall, *Contemporary Critical Theory*, New York, 1993, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> The notion of „theory,” the target of Knapp and Michaels’ attack (op.cit.), is ultimately ambivalent, too. It not only has an “epistemological” or a “methodological” facets (the two authors using the terms alternately), but an “ontological,” and thus theoretical, aspect as well (think of the author’s intention, status of literary language, etc.). Likewise ambiguous is “theory” in Paul de Man’s approach, in “The Resistance to Theory” (*Yale French Studies*, 63, 1981). It should be pointed out, too, that “critical theory” is occasionally used interchangeably with “literary theory.”

<sup>21</sup> V. Žmegač, Preface to the anthology, *Methoden der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft. Eine Dokumentation*, Frankfurt, 1971, p. 9.

exists at all, for there are no rules of reasoning in that, or at best there are certain indications directing the exploration of literature.”<sup>22</sup>

If that is the case, then let us make it very clear that different currents of literary studies exist with different thematic and issue-related vectors, and different theoretical premises, yet with no well-defined methods of study.

Fricke, however, seems to be going a bit too far. Some areas of these studies do have their methodical instruments, even if a lot of that has been borrowed from other disciplines. Herein belong, for example, hermeneutical rules used in interpretation (more efficient, admittedly, in falsifying interpretations rather than in demonstrating their truth). So do rules borrowed from structural linguistics, for literary analysis, or the phenomenological “variabilization” for constructions of theoretical concepts.

More difficult to arrive at are modern statements of strictly methodical character developed within the science of literature as such. By way of example, let us mention *Influence in Art and Literature* (1975) by Göran Hermerén, *Strukturelle Textanalyse* (1977) by Manfred Titzmann (who identified no fewer than 67 rules of interpretation), or the same author’s “Probleme des Epochenbegriffs in der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung” (1983).<sup>23</sup> Methodological in character, in the sense envisaged herein, are the books by Heide Göttner and Joachim Jacobs, *Der logische Bau von Literaturtheorien* (1978) or by Werner Strube, *Analytische Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft* (1992) that explore different types of definition, classification, interpretation or evaluation of literary texts. However works of that character, most of them in German, are few and probably of little impact on literary history or criticism.

At a time of attacks on theory in general, of constant transgression of borderlines between different fields of literary study and those lying between literary studies and cultural studies, or even at a time of deliberate blurring of borders between the science of literature and literature itself, it is hard to pronounce any optimistic forecast for the near future. But, mindful of an alternate pattern of opposite tendencies in humanities, perhaps the development of literary study methodics is going to be a program if not for now then for tomorrow perhaps?

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<sup>22</sup> H. Fricke, „Methoden?, Prämissen?, Argumentationsweisen!“ in: *Vom Umgang mit Literatur und Literaturgeschichte*, ed. by L. Danneberg, F. Volkhardt, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 214.

<sup>23</sup> In: *Klassik und Moderne*, ed. by K. Richter, Stuttgart, 1983.