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SLOVENE LITERARY HISTORY TODAY

The article urges abandoning the outdated concept of a synthetic national "grand narrative" of literature and replacing it with a listing concept. The motivation for changing the literary historical paradigm derives from a) the sharp increase in the number of publications, which are no longer manageable in the traditional manner, b) public Internet access to large bibliographic and text collections and tools for manipulating them, c) the practice publishing encyclopedic literary scholarship in Wikipedia, d) cognizance of apprehension of the world as a list. The opportunity exists for a literary history composed as a mosaic or mycelia in the framework of Wikipedia's sister pages Wikibooks, Wikisource, and Wikiversity, which motivate students' and other interested humanists' participation in literary studies. There are ample qualified experts. The change is fitting for the information society, which is based on distributed cooperative, networked knowledge production and the end of the exclusivity of aesthetic selection.

Key words: Slovene literary history, literary progress, list, story, Internet encyclopedia

The concept of literary history is usually linked to a national literature and demarcated by it; a single world literature does not exist. Literary history began with bibliographic descriptions and biographies of important writers. The concept of literary progress, actuated in selecting, interpreting, and evaluating individual writers and works that seemed important to progress, assured it a prominent place in scholarship. This is how literary history constituted and confirmed a national canon and devised a story of the national literature conceived as a developmental process. In order to explain phenomena, it employed metaphors of living organisms, indicative of the nineteenth-century biological outlook, which described conception, birth, or appearance; growth, maturation, and culmination; and—in the future—decay, death, or transformation. Matjaž Kmecl wrote of such grand "*story*" of Slovene literature and letters":

> We can confidently say that modern Slovene literature appeared and until "yesterday" developed under the violent pressure of national self-affirmation. The understanding of a people as one of the main units of sovereignty or any possible independence became decisively bound to language in the nineteenth century, and since literature is "art in language," it is at once fundamental proof of a unique identity, and "natural" rights to self-determination and statehood go with it. (Kmecl 2004: 7)

And Gregor Kocijan (2012: 7) observed: "I tied published materials, interpretations, and research results together in a more or less arranged whole… so that the whole would be as complete as possible—in a word, that the entire thing would sound like a "narrative.""

Efforts at periodization in literary history are meant to affirm literature's coherence and autonomous status—that is, its proper vital forces and internal developmental logic. The periodization of great works was at first, with Matija Čop, chronological (by century); then, with Karel Glaser, historical (by revolution); and today as a rule, though often violated (Kmecl 2004: 19), by stylistic periods or *Geistesgeschichte*.

The chapter on "Literary Histories" in the dictionary *Slovenska književnost* (Slovene literature 1996) includes under this heading monographic treatments of large numbers of texts and authors, but in the context of some literary period (e.g., twentieth-century expressionism), genre (rural tale, short prose, criticism, children's literature), motif (Lepa Vida, the handicapped), element of the literary system (writer, France Kidrič, Dušan Pirjevec), or region (Vienna, Primorska, emigration). For the key words *slovenska književnost* 'Slovene literature' and *literarna zgodovina* 'literary history', the Cobiss system supplies 255 monographs, of which 100 remain[1] after theses, off prints, commentaries, textbooks, and the like are eliminated.

In the very narrow sense, and as this survey intends, literary histories are synthetic monographs with what once was the standard title "a history of Slovene literature" (zgodovina slovenskega slovstva, ZSS): Karel Glaser's *ZSS 1–4* (1894–1998); Ivan Grafenauer's *Kratka ZSS* (Short ...1919), France Kidrič's *ZSS od začetkov do Zoisove smrti* (…from the beginnings to the death of Zois 1929–38); Ivan Prijatelj's *Slovenska kulturnopolitična in slovstvena zgodovina 1848–1895, 1–6* (Slovene cultural-political and literary history 1848–1895 1955–1985); Slovenska Matica's *ZSS* (1956–71); *Slovenska književnost 1945–1965, 1–2* (Slovene literature 1945–1965 1967); Anton Slodnjak's *Slovensko slovstvo* (Slovene letters 1968); Franc Zadravec and Jože Pogačnik's *ZSS, 1–8* (1968–72); *Slovenska književnost, 1–3* (1998–2001); and Matjaž Kmecl's *Tisoč let slovenske literature* (A thousand years of Slovene literature 2004). The dictionary *Literatura* (2009) does not include the first of these, Glaser's extensive literary history, under the heading "literary history," apparently because of its negative reception at the time of publication for its lack of a developmental concept. It more closely resembled an extended bibliography than a literary history. An unpardonable mistake is the omission of *Slovenska književnost 1945–1965*.

A literary history in the narrow sense is usually a publication in multiple volumes by many authors who treat all segments of Slovene literature, from the beginnings and until the present, or as *Slovenska književnost 1945–1965*, treat only a specific time period of the subject broadly understood, as continuations of previous literary histories or their parts. A literary history strives to unite two different principles: 1. the encyclopedic or enumerative, meaning a maximally exhaustive description of the whole of literary production—Kmecl called it a "systematic, positivist, exhaustive collection and description" (Kmecl 2004: 436); and 2. synthetic, meaning discovery of a red thread of development—Ivan Prijatelj called literary history a "generalizing discipline that never mechanically orders but organically weaves" (ibid.), or the "variants of developmental norms" (Kmecl 2004: 444), "which could simply be called the story of Slovene literature and letters." In it we find only those authors who illustrate it most colorfully (Kmecl 2004: 436). The grand story (or

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[1] In the UDC "literary history" has the number 821.163.6.09 assigned to it, but entering it in a Cobiss search yields too many hits to be useful.

perhaps grand synthesis) is the stable myth, long-lived phantom of each successive Slovene literary history.

Sooner or later quality is attributed to a literary history because of how it demonstrates the narrative principle; therefore, certain important chapters that do not belong to the central developmental story are usually omitted from literary histories, despite their encyclopedic ambitions: popular literature, literature in TV, film and radio formats, literary folklore, and so forth. There is the perpetual fear lest a text "fade away into unparsed enumeration without any evident logic," and thus biographical and bibliographical exhaustiveness is better left aside. Instead, literary historians reweigh literature's developmental norms (its "inner force," "inner workings"), as evidenced in changes to stylistic periods, in light of social and political changes that Slovenes experienced at the end of the twentieth century (KMECL 2004: 444–45), and with the help of new methods of literary scholarship.

The last collective literary history, *Slovenska književnost, 1–3,* met with a quite animated reception when its final volume appeared in 2001. Not long afterwards, Kmecl's *Tisoč let slovenske literature* (2004)[2] came out, which distanced itself from all-embracing literary history, but nonetheless cast glances at it. Given the exceptional increase in literary production in recent decades, which the press calls "megalomania," the most pressing things seem to be selecting and focusing on that which might "survive the test of time." Answering general social expectations and also the convictions of some scholars, literary history has been assigned this task.[3] A second task of literary history is reinterpreting familiar stories in literary history that were spawned by the unquestionable goal of constituting Slovendom in the nineteenth century on the basis of language, and which grew out of the antipodes of romantic-realistic, imagined-real, high-low, oral-written, and domestic-foreign, while ignoring certain other traits—for example, religious or regional affiliation (DARASZ 2002: 544).[4]

Among the more objective reactions to *Slovenska književnost III* we can cite Mateja Pezdirc Bartol's (2002) review. She pointed out its positive innovations, especially the up-to-date decision on chapters that were missing in previous literary histories: on émigré, and Slovene minority literature; children's literature; journals, literary scholarship, and criticism; and literature in translation. She voiced criticism of the selection, which seemed to her subject to arbitrary personal preferences: authors that the contributors had written about were treated more thoroughly, and those they had not happened to were dealt superficially or not at all. She did not see a unified editorial concept, the lack of which disrupted balance between chapters, and she noted an excess of enumeration, leading to a lack of organization in the book. All of these objections are rooted in the absence of a clear developmental story that would furnish criteria for distinguishing the important from the unimportant and for convincing classification or distribution of material in the chapters. The authors could no longer organize post-war literary texts by period markers on the model of those

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[2] I am leaving out surveys of Slovene literature in other languages from that time (Mitrović 2001, Vasle 2003).

[3] Similar ventures are important for literary criticism and anthology editors as well.

[4] Taras Kermauner—for example, in the title of the series of over 200 books named The Reconstruction and Reinterpretation of Slovene drama—used term "reinterpretation" as a declaration.

that existed (e.g., modernism, expressionism, social realism); instead, they arranged them by theme or genre. The criticism of the book's poor graphic design confirms the suspicion that the authors were only doing their duty, without demonstrating enough care or firm belief in their work so as visually to convince readers of their view of Slovene literature.

The dissatisfaction of the Slovene scholarly milieu, which was expressed in periodical reviews immediately after *Slovenska književnost 3* appeared, two years later was directed at the collection *Kako pisati literarno zgodovino danes?* (*Writing literary history: Selected perspectives from Central Europe*, ed. by Darko Dolinar and Marko Juvan, Frankfurt am Main (etc.): Peter Lang, 2006). There were many reasons for the unusual and surprising critical reaction. Some may have been offended that they were not invited to contribute, or it may have been a matter of the old rivalry between Slovene studies, where the book arose, and comparative literature, which may have felt itself marginalized. Speculative but nonetheless worthy of consideration is the conjecture that the dissatisfaction was attributable to competition between literary theory and history—or more precisely, the preference for publications on literary theory and a priori rejection of a historical or other context for literature. This is to say that literary historians have a conservative reputation.

The collection was received as a criticism of the current writing of literary history, but at the same time was seen to legitimate it, because it evinced readiness to respect the actual situation in the field and to adapt to changed conditions. Critics belonging to competing ideologies agreed on resisting empiricism and historicism: Janko Kos wagged a finger at the dangers of decadence, nihilism, and anarchism; Boris PATERNU (2005: 103) at the loss of autonomy, abandonment of the text, and refusal to evaluate;[5] he proposed avoiding these dangers by revitalizing the story, which he fatalistically entrusted to the future appearance of a great "fortuitous persona."

I reflected on the collected *Kako pisati literarno zgodovino danes* in a review, part of which was published on its cover:

Traditional national literary history, as a list of important authors and their works, is a thing of the past; in its place, the subject is now genre-defined corpora of texts, and differentiating between elite and popular literature in no longer productive for producing a literary canon and literary history, just as we can no longer speak about a single existing text, but must learn to view a text as a process, and acquire modern presentational methods in the work of literary history. The differentiation of readers and their needs in the society as a whole has led to the collapse of the concept of a unified national literature. Now each social group demands its own literary history: minorities, women, young people, and readers of popular literature. The concept of a unified developmental trajectory in literature, which enables literary history, no longer exists. We can no longer say of literary event that it has a clearly identifiable predecessors and followers and therefore clearly belongs to some developmental line. Literary history is an undertaking that was born in

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[5] This generation of literary historians' experiences with positivism in their younger years must have been traumatic, otherwise it is difficult to understand their repeated rejections of tendencies that appear to be continuations of positivism. They continually accuse them of simplified social determinism and blindness to artistic accomplishments.

Romanticism along with the appearance of nation states in nineteenth-century Europe and its task was to affirm the nation's identity. Individual authors' opuses were but phases in the nation's development, growth, and flourishing. Since contemporary society no longer relates to nineteenth-century ideals, different norms determine contemporary literary history: democratization, multilingualism, multimedia, and interculturalism.

Critics' contributions to the collection indicated in different ways the end of the era when the process of constituting the nation gave the writing of literature and literary history its meaning. There was less reflection on how fundamental shifts in civilization alter great literary historical projects—that is, the transition to an information society and digitalization and virtualization of life as a whole: how literary history is influenced by methodological changes that the humanities have incorporated with the appearance and spread of Internet accessible databases, new forms of academic research, and the communication, publication, and presentation of results.

At the start of the decade, I wrote (Hladnik 2001) about the need to change the scholarly paradigm. Literary scholarship might return to literary history, but now in such a way as to

- research complete corpora of texts instead of with prominent authors' opuses or individual texts,
- deal with the analysis of texts and authors without preliminary segregation into artistic and popular,
- consider the literary system as a whole, not just the literary text (including the production and reception dimensions), and
- employ digital tools to acquire and analyze tests and promulgate scholarly findings.

Since then new research and presentational possibilities have appeared that were not available or just in their infancy a decade ago. There have been three large changes: 1. The first is the quickly growing, Internet accessible corpus of fiction and other texts resulting from the digitalization of books and periodicals in the Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije (Digital library of Slovenia, dLib), via Google and other sources, which are proofread in Wikivir. It is also supported by Cobiss and the database Slovensko leposlovje na spletu (Slovene fiction on the Internet). 2. Internet tools have appeared for distributed cooperative knowledge production on the Internet, such as Wikipedia, Wikisource, Wikiversity, and Wikibooks, which are radical alternatives to traditional methods of production, distribution, reception, and editing, because a) the authority of the academic writer or talented creator is replaced by group, lay, and even anonymous authorship, b) they are not tied to either commercial or academic publishing channels, but depend on volunteers' dedication, and c) they are no longer driven by the ideal of finished, polished text, but by the practice of continual change (correction), mosaic-like filling out, and mutual textual connectedness. 3) These two innovations are linked and conceptually framed by the metaphor of a list, which replaces ever more difficult to employ metaphors of the great story of progress.

Both the corpus and the tools influence in the same direction: a growing corpus that is instantly accessible and verifiable makes the reader aware that besides the school, anthology, and literary historical canon there is a multitude of texts and

authors that call for rereading and reflection; and wikis eliminate scholarship's dependence on authoritative literary historians, who are in short supply, and traditional publishing channels, putting the onus on the creative energy of the many—or better said, the everyman.

Lest the ideas of the many and the average inflame fear for civilization,[6] it is necessary to interject the calming experience that the creative many is unfortunately *contradictio in adjecto*, and that literary history cannot count on a multitude of alternative writers, because there are simply not enough people—and even less qualified ones—who would be interested in such an activity. In addition to a few literary historians attracted by new publishing opportunities and just as rare interested individuals from other disciplines who take part as wiki administrators, we can only count on students of literature for filling out and correcting literary historical information. They contribute as part of their requirements from their seminar, baccalaureate, and M.A. theses at, of course, their mentors' urging.

The crucial role and civilizing potential of Wikipedia are seen in how the quality of the entries measures the vitality of languages and their potential to survive.[7] Some reasons for promoting Wikipedia and similar sites might be ease of access (we do not lose time searching for information because Wikipedia is a top hit), voluntariness (publishing is not linked with the intent of monetary gain but more with sating curiosity by acquiring knowledge), cooperation (in place of the practice of individual publications, global disconnectedness, local and scholarly smugness and authorial pride that burden the humanities), and closer ties with reality, which includes consideration of the audience's comprehension and interests, and recommends clear and concise or reference-work expression that must also be nonpartisan. A foray into reference-work style is salubrious for literary scholars, who tend to the tradition of long periods and frequently hermetic and promotional or contrary expression.[8]

Wikipedija is the optimal place for information that can be covered encyclopedically (glossary of terms, actors [fiction and academic authors], institutions, events, descriptions of texts).[9] Scholarly monographs that do not have an encyclopedic form are for Wikibooks; communications about projects, seminar materials, and papers belong on Wikiversity; the study of literary studies has found a place on Wikisource.

Publishing on easily accessible Wikimedia sites does require much technical acumen.[10] The possibility of reviewing an entry's history and returning to previous text ariants is valuable, as is the possibility of international comparison of information

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[6] Jaron Lanier speaks of digital Maoism ("Digital Maoism: The Hazards of the New Online Collectivism," 2006); see my article Wikipedia in the educational process and interview with Urške P. Černe ("Dedič avantgardizma" [The heir of the avant-garde], *Literatura* 22/233 nov. 2010: 78–111); both on the Internet. However, the research of Aaron Swartz, who measured the quantity of information added rather than the number of edits in Wikipedia shows that a creative multitude exists: the bulk of the information in Wikipedia does not come from a small core of collaborators but from one-time or occasional users.

[7] András Kornal, Language Death in the Digital Age, Meta-Forum 2012, Videolectures.net.

[8] I write about evaluative excesses in the article "Moj študij Slodnjaka" (My study of Slodnjak, *Literarnovedno srečanje ob 100-letnici rojstva prof. dr. Antona Slodnjaka*, Ljubljana: Oddelek za slovanske jezike in književnosti, 2000, 87–93; also on the Internet.

[9] See the portal Literatura on Slovene Wikipedia.

[10] Wikimedia is a non-profit organization that supports and connects Wikipedia and sister sites.

through connections with Wikipedia in other languages, the opportunity to comment on the discussion page, and, of course, the possibility of continual updating and improving. Wikipedia documents give the hope of greater longevity than those with which we have had experience on institutional or commercial sites, where for various reasons (a change in mechanical or program support, departure of an author or administrator, closing of an institution, site address change, etc.) documents disappear. Wikipedia information is incomparably more accessible than that in printed books.

Although authorship in Wikipedia is in principle collective, eliminating the necessity of identifying an individual author, publications are accompanied by a Creative Commons license, which maintains authorial attribution. It is possible to identify an author's every comma in a text's history. Wikis facilitate and encourage the participation of students and not only established experts, and therefore they are not only information sources but also have great educational potential.

The ideal of free publishing, easy access to information, and freedom from state or profit interests gave birth to Wikipedia and its sister sites. Wikipedia publications are in principle non-academic, but they belong to the scholarly as much as do printed references. Proven review procedures ensure the reliability of print and Internet academic publications; dedicated individuals who form the Wiki community but who are not necessarily experts in the field oversee Wikipedia publications. With a growing number of academics cooperating on Wikipedia, and continually increasing specialization, the bar of expectations is rising. The initially simple entries are becoming more informative and useful with the input of competent scholars. The more that literary scholars take part, the more quality the entries will have. Disciplines that do not take advantage of this unique promotional channel only display their detachment, ignorance, backwardness, rigidity, and complacency, and threaten their own future in a world that does not tolerate such qualities. The disciplines themselves are responsible for possibly defective information on Wikipedia and its sister sites.

The publication possibilities on Wikimedia sites are also attractive for Slovene literary scholarship. Wikibooks would be the best place for a monograph history of Slovene literature that would continue the tradition of extensive, multi-volume editions and adjust it to the altered research and publication conditions. Everything that has to this point been researched and published on Slovene literature could be transferred here, and space could be provided for descriptions, analyses, classifications, and interpretations of contemporary literature that is not yet the subject of literary history.[11] *Slovenska književnost 3* covered recent times but not so thoroughly as had *Slovenska književnost 1945–1965*; therefore, the period after 1965, or the last fifty years of Slovene literary activity, especially deserves attention. For this reason, a working table of contents under the header *Slovenska književnost 1965–2015* was posted to Wikibooks in January 2011. It gives an indication of the breadth and nature of future writings on literary history. It is an illusion to hope that the numerous planned chapters will soon be filled; however, the table of contents is necessary to contextualize individual studies and serves as a motivation for reorganizing education and publishing in the discipline.

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[11] Marko Juvan anticipated this possibility in the chapter on "Literarna zgodovina kot hipertekst" (Literary history as hypertext, 2003: 42–44).

The main chapters are "Production," "Distribution," "Reception," "Texts," and "Processing." A reliance on traditional literary history is evident in the introductory chapters on the political, economic, and cultural context, and the chapter "Bibliography." More unusual, in the chapter "Production," are the sub-chapters "Creative writing schools"; "Study of literature"; "Subventions, stipends, honoraria"; "Reprints"; "The literature of Slovenes writing in Spanish, German, English, Italian…";[12] "Literature in dialect"; "Literature in slang"; "Translations of Slovene literature into other languages"; "Editing"; and "Hypertext."

There is even more novelty in the chapter "Distribution": "Publishing houses," "Book stores," "Rare book stores," "Book clubs," "Libraries," "Self-publishing," "Performances" (press conferences, readings, fairs, TV appearances), "Mass editions for retail sale," and "Media." Under "Media" are: "Book"; "Periodicals: literary and cultural reviews, newspapers (feuilleton, literary inserts)"; fanzines; "Audio-books"; "New media" (collections of texts on the Internet, hyperliterature; notebooks, readers, mobile phones); "Theater"; "Dramatizations" (theater, radio, film, t.v., comics, librettos, musical renditions, recitations, performance art, post-drama theater with textual montage, computer games).

The chapter "Reception" will contain sub-chapters "Original and translated literature," "Reading" (borrowing, buying), "Listening," "Theatrical reception," "Reception of hypertexts," "Authorial rights," and "Readers' forums" (t.v., on-line).

The chapter "Texts" contains innovative sub-chapters on individual genres: "The historical novel" (biographical novel, Zeitroman); "Adventure novel"; "Fantasy"; "Autobiography"; "Social criticism"; "Spiritual literature"; "Science fiction"; "Crime novel"; "Humorous literature"; "Children's genres"; "Other genres: travel literature, Alpine literature, sport novel, rural tale, pornography, women's literature, medical fiction, fan fiction, novels about occupations/status (model, student, inmate, divorcee, artist, invalid).

Some non-traditional topes are also planned for the chapter on "Processing": "Canonization" ("Editing critical editions", e.g., The Collected Works of Slovene Poets and Writers, "Anthologies," "Prizes," "Reprints," "Celebrations," "Jubilees," "Conferences," "Symposia," "Museums," "Memorial markers and rooms," "Literary trails," "Digitalization," "Collections of texts"); "Institutions" (schools, institutes, academies, Slovene studies abroad); "Use of literature in philosophy, sociology, history, psychology, ethnology, musicology, cultural studies"; "Literature in advertising, graffiti, obituaries, personal anniversaries and other social occasions"; "Literature in other arts" (painting, sculpture, architecture, music); "Literature and reality" (fictiveness, roman à clef, thematization of recent historical events); "Literature and (cultural) history"; "Literature and the law (censorship, responsibility, ethics)"; "Literature and politics" (court poet, inmate, people's tribunal)"; "Literature and culture" (national, intellectual)"; "Literature and economics"; "Literature and space: geomapping, spatial representations"; "Literature and media competition"; "Literature and the Slovene Academy of Sciences"; "Literature in the schools: textbook selection, academic plan, primary school, middle school, higher education, mandatory schooling, recreational reading."

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[12] On including foreign-language texts in the history of Slovene literature, see Darasz (2002: 547).

From this list it is clear that the concept of Slovene literature is broader than as represented by recent printed literary histories, which tend to identify it with belles lettres. There is less attention to individual texts, authors, and their opuses, and more of a desire to attend to genre and other corpora. Literature is more decisively than before placed into different contexts, resulting in a weakening of the assumption of its autonomy. Slovene as the language of the original is no longer a key condition for inclusion in Slovene literature. Translations into Slovene, translations of Slovene texts into other languages, and second-language literature by Slovene or foreign writers that is sold, borrowed, and read in Slovenia in the original are all taken into consideration. The reason for ending the restriction to Slovene language is the shift of attention from genius authors who chose Slovene to express themselves and thus became representatives of the nation, to the reader, who reads not only because reasons of nationalistic affirmation and is thus less hesitant to choose reading matter in another language. The dispensing of the greatest danger to constituting the nation and to nineteenth-century emancipation might also be added—that is, the rivalry from the dominant German after WW I (Darasz 2002), were it not for Serbo-Croatian later successfully assuming the role, and then (and still now) English.

The call to collaborate on Slovenska književnost 1965–2015 on Wikiboos reached a wide circle of potentially competent writers via the SlovLit listproc. The response was slim,[13] even as the structure was being expanded and modified—that is, chapters being introduced and arranged. From the reaction to the second such call I conclude that colleagues are disturbed precisely by those features that are significant and essential to the new communications platform. First of all that is the possibility of anyone entering the project, which sparks fear that either lay persons or "others" will spoil our contributions. My answer is many years of experience without ruinous intrusion. The Wiki community, which values the inclusion of qualified scholars, quickly blocks rare individual vandalism or unsuitable cooperation.

Another consideration has to do with the anonymity of publication, which makes their citation in individual academic bibliographies impossible and deprives people of points to climb the academic ladder. The encouraging part of the answer is that authorial participation in Wikemedia sites is evidenced in pages' histories more exactly than anywhere else, and that they are anonymous only when the author does not wish to be identified or forgets to log in. The less encouraging part of the answer is Wikis do not have the same status as peer reviewed scholarly journals, and publications will not be credited with points until more scholars publish there, assuring maximum quality information with their publications and causing corresponding changes in the valuing of academic publications.

The concept of literary progress, which proved to be the most sensitive point for contemporary literary history, is not to be found in the plan I have presented. A realization of the difficulty with the concept of literary progress parallels current economic and environmental statements about the impossibility of permanent growth,

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[13] Marko Juvan's e-mail comments I copied into the notes to the table of contents; Aleš Vaupotič added comments himself.

growth being one of the most obvious indicators of progress.[14] Because the metaphor
of literary development is at the foundation of the discipline, scholarly discourse (and
in general all kinds of descriptions of literature) is difficult to conceive of without
it.[15] The neglect of progress questions the entire organization of the discipline to date.
Literary prizes were and are founded on developmental potential and developmen-
tal achievements, and on the prizes rest positive literary assessments and decisions
about canonization. Literary scholarship is subject to the same kind of developmental
postulate that literature is. Each new synthesis in literary history derives from the
necessity of depicting the story differently than before—for instance: "The original
intent of this overview of Slovene literature and letters was an attempt at a revised
view of the Slovene literary past" (KMECL 2004: 436).

The concept of development remains problematic as long as we understand it in
the sense of continual biological growth or economic expansion, which are in opposi-
tion to global limitedness and concern us with the question of what comes next, after
the limits have been reached? The concept is more circumscribable if we are aware
of its cognitive extent, corresponding to the understanding that it refers to an increase
in human choice, engendered by ever greater knowledge.[16] The metaphor of the grand
story of literature no longer matches this definition of development, carried into the
sphere of literature. The metaphor represented and described events in the Slovene
literary system until the twenty-first century, when given the independent state and
an information society it became superfluous. Most suitable is the metaphor of a list
that is constantly updated with new selections.[17] The list's endlessness is assured by
the non-physical form of its items. In a general sense this is information of all kinds;
in the sense of Slovene literary history, an increasing list of texts of all kinds (in the
future, of course, digital) that suddenly no longer cause frustration because of their
unmanageable quantity. The encyclopedic principle does not require weighing the
texts for possible inclusion in a survey of literature's story. They fulfill their role by
increasing the possibility (of reader) selection and thus help improve the quality of
life.

Literary history's role is now to register and catalog new selections of possibilities
(genre, stylistic, informative, authorial, media), and not to depict a grand develop-
mental story that successfully organized only the literary materials of past periods.
Literary history once did this, and so it is not a completely new assignment. Only the

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[14] Development, growth, and progress are key concepts in Western civilization (see the entries in the
English-language Wikipedia).

[15] The first sentence of the introduction to *Slovenska književnost 1945–1965, 1*, for example, highlights
development: "The study of post-war Slovene literature, treated by literary genre, is the first systematic
attempt to determine the main **developmental** tendencies, significance, and values of recent literary activi-
ties in Slovenia" (5). The first sentence of the first chapter on literature in *Slovenska književnost, 3* (2001)
cannot do without it either: "Poetry in Slovene literature has the most integrated **development** and rela-
tively large number of artistic successes" (31). Also consider the first sentence of the dictionary definition
of literary history: "The history of literature is the historical **development** of writings« (Literary history,
Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). (All emphases mine – MH.)

[16] Human development (humanity), *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*.

[17] The necessity of a story as an organizing principle was additionally lessened by the realization of the
constructed and thus arbitrary nature of grand stories.

preferences have changed: in the future, care for literary lists will be reason enough for its existence. The table of contents of *Slovenska književnost 1965–2015* presents a plan for describing genre corpora that are based on a thorough bibliographic description of the kind that in the past, because of bibliographic black holes and difficulty accessing texts did not exist.

Umberto Eco notes the utility of the list metaphor in his book *The Infinity of Lists*. The list (register, roll, catalog, database, record, directory, file) is less used in history than stories to understand the world, although it is sometimes just as fascinating. The story essays to define phenomena in their essences, but a list defines them by enumerating their qualities (Eco 2011: 217). The essentialist storytelling approach appears to be more daring and speculative, but the listing approach implies that core of a thing cannot be expressed and is inaccessible. In principle, lists convey that the world is endless, immeasurable, divers, unordered, disconnected, unorganic, decentered, non-hierarchical, and thus difficult to circumscribe. The rhetorical figures that structure lists are accumulation and ennumeration.[18] As compared with the phantasm of the grand narrative genre, today's database is defined as "the twenty-first century genre" (Folsom 2007), in the name of which literary scholarship will be carried out in the future (McGregor 2012).

Among the literary genres that make use of enumerative, listing, or episodic composition are, for instance, joke collections and picaresque, collective, and pornographic novels. The genres of text related to research on fiction that do so are bibliographies, anthologies, dictionaries, and encyclopedias.[19] In the Slovene Wikipedia, lists are the point of departure for serious work: a list of Slovene poets and prose writers, of young writers, literary historians, literary personages, novels, literary trails, literary prizes, and so forth. There is a collection of literary memorials on Geopedija. Wikipedia and Wikisource also arrange entries into lists when categorizing them— for instance, a work marked for the category "rural tale" automatically turns up in a list of other texts with the same marker. In the same way authors are grouped into lists of those born in the same year; whose books appeared in the same year; texts by the same author, in the same genre, or stylistic profile; editors; translators; and foreign Slovenists.

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[18] Similar metaphor for the list is rhizome or mycelium. For the philosophical meaning rhizome (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari), see the entry *Rhizom* (Philosophie), *Wikipedia, die freie Enzyklopädie*. Taras Kermauner introduced the term *micelij* 'mycelium'. Eco also points out that the list fits the contemporary consumer's apprehension of the world (e.g., shopping list), for which plenty and voracity (gluttony) are significant. Of course, this is but one of the possible metaphoric uses, the one that is diametrically opposed to the intentions of this article.

[19] Enumerability is characteristic of veristic literature (e.g., descriptions of feasts in Rabelais) and naturalism. Aside from literature, enumerability is significant in painting, especially in still lifes and crowd scenes (e.g., battles, the Last Judgment), lists of saints, demons, angels, beasts (bestiaries), miracles, relics, and treasures. Just as archeology discovered great research value in dumps, literary scholars can take advantage of lists of forgotten and discarded (popular) texts that the digitalization of old periodicals can unearth. Janij Kovačič's novel *Knjiga* (The book 2009) illustrates the shift to listing in contemporary Slovene literature. Slovene encyclopedic activities find symbolic support in the Medieval saint Isidore of Seville (Eco 2011: 154), who was recently made patron of the Internet. Ivan Tavčar provided a connection via his chronicler Izidor Khallan in the novel *Visoška kronika* (The Visoko chronicle; see my 2006 article "Esej na maturi" [Matriculation composition] on novel).

The listing or encyclopedic principle of understanding and ordering the world would probably not have a role in replacing the literary historical paradigm without technology's rich resources and support: managing long lists containing a large amount of data without computing is impossible. It has so changed the manner of human thought and recollection that the story as a mnemonic device no longer has a monopoly on organizing the image of the world; it has brought into the world the concept of distant reading,[20] which nicely complements the ideal of close reading of selected works of art, as urged by traditional literary history. The danger of the subject and discipline losing autonomy in the face of the forecast changes here enumerated, as felt by the kind of literary history that continues to be burdened by the ideal of a great synthesis, is negligible as compared with the ultimate goal of scholarly disciplines—that is, the promise of a better, more sophisticated understanding of the world.

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[20] "Distant reading: where distance...is a condition of knowledge: it allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems...well, it is one of those cases when one can justifiably say, Less is more." (Franco Moretti, Conjectures on world literature, *New Left Review* 1 (*2000*), web).

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