

Muses and Measures: Empirical Research Methods for the Humanities

by *Willie Van Peer, Jèmeljan Hakemulder and Sonia Zyngier*



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"Here is a lucidly clear, fact-rich guide to empirical research in the traditional humanities. Given the shortage of methodological considerations in humanistic study, this is just what we need. It is not only students who will learn from this book, but scholars at all levels. *Muses and Measures* points to exciting new directions for disciplines involved in culture and aesthetics. It is a brilliant book."

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"This is a textbook that has been needed for decades. It should be required reading for every student (and professor) in literary studies and, for that matter, in any humanistic discipline. Humanistic methods of inquiry certainly have their place, but all too often humanistic scholars present

entire theories and have no idea how to test them or even realize that

they should be tested in a scientific manner. Such scholars can only try to convince readers that they are right. It is absurd to use rhetoric when there are perfectly good empirical methods of testing such theories. If they are not so tested, they are quite likely to lead us astray.

In a very engaging way, the authors almost seduce readers into wanting to learn about empirical methods and statistics. The book is full of suggested projects for students. Students are led through how to search sources such as PsycInfo in order to get ideas and then gradually introduced to basic statistics and shown in detail how to analyze data that they themselves may have gathered. By focusing on practical matters and not bothering much with formulas that will soon be forgotten, readers are given a good intuitive grasp of not just simple statistics but also statistics at an intermediate level."

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Willie van Peer holds a Ph.D. from Lancaster University, and is Professor of Literary Studies and Intercultural Hermeneutics at the University of Munich, former President of IGEL (International Association for the Empirical Study of Literature) and of PALA (Poetics and Linguistics Association).

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The three researchers have set up the REDES Project, an international and multicultural programme aiming at training young researchers. (www.redes.de/portal and www.letras.ufrj.br/redes)

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