

Distant Reading

for European Literary History: A COST Action

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Introduction

This poster describes the COST Action *Distant Reading for European Literary History* (CA16204 – Distant-Reading). COST is funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the EU.

What is a COST Action?

COST ('European Cooperation in Science and Technology') Actions are essentially networking initiatives focused on a particular, timely and innovative research topic, aiming to bring together a critical mass of researchers from Europe and beyond. COST Actions coordinate their activities through working group meetings and offer Training Schools and opportunities for scientific exchange.

Purpose

The 'Distant Reading' COST Action aims to apply recent computational, and particularly quantitative, approaches to the study of the multilingual literary traditions of Europe in the long nineteenth century.

Four areas of activity

The Action's activities are divided into four working groups:

- "Scholarly Resources", focused on structuring, annotating and publishing the ELTeC;
- "Methods and Tools", concerned with using, evaluating and developing methods for distant reading analysis;
- "Literary History and Theory", dedicated to the theoretical consequences of distant reading methods for literary history and theory;
- "Dissemination", concerned with internal and external communication about our activities.

The network

Our network of members is currently comprised of researchers in Corpus Linguistics, Computational Linguistics, (Digital) Literary History and Literary Theory from 28 different countries and more than 40 cities across Europe and beyond.

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Our key deliverable: the ELTeC

Our key deliverable is the European Literary Text Collection (ELTeC) that brings together comparable sets of nineteenth-century novels from at least 10 different European languages. Each set will comprise 100 different novels, from both inside and outside the canon, published in the late nineteenth century, with extensions covering the early nineteenth century or adding additional novels from the late nineteenth century.

The ELTeC is at the core of the COST Action and will serve as a benchmark corpus for the evaluation and development of annotation tools and distant reading methods across languages and as the basis for investigations into patterns and trends in literary history in multiple literary traditions.