

2025 ICLA Congress-Seoul

KINTEX, Goyang City / Dongguk University
Seoul, Republic of Korea
28th July - 1st August, 2025

Conference Agenda

Overview and details of the sessions of this conference. Please select a date or location to show only sessions at that day or location. Please select a single session for detailed view (with abstracts and downloads if available).

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Session Overview

Session

(303) Digital Comparative Literature (4)

Time: Wednesday, 30/July/2025: 3:30pm - 5:00pm

Session Chair: **Simone Rebora**, University of Verona

Location: KINTEX 1 206B

50 people KINTEX room number 206B

Presentations

ID: 758 / 303: 1

ICLA Research Committee Individual Submissions

Topics: R12. ICLA Research Committees Proposal - Digital Comparative Literature

Keywords: Digital Social Reading, Reader response studies, Literary criticism

Digital Social Reading and Comparative Literature: Three Case Studies

Simone Rebora

University of Verona, Italy

The paper will provide an overview on the study of the phenomenon of Digital Social Reading (DSR, cf. Pianzola 2025) from the perspective of comparative literary studies. DSR, involving the reviewing and commenting activity of millions of users on platforms like Goodreads and Wattpad, has been described as “reading carried out on virtual environments where the book and the reading favour the formation of a ‘community’ and a means of exchange” (Cordón-García et al., 2013).

In a recent categorization by Rebora et al. (2021), ten different types of studies dealing with DSR were discussed, involving disciplines such as sociology, marketing, new media studies, and literacy studies, together with literary studies. In general, DSR research invites an unprecedented integration between literary studies and digital/computational methods. The talk will provide an overview of three projects I am currently contributing to that show particular relevance to comparative literary studies.

First, the study of the phenomenon of story world absorption across different literary genres in the reviews published on the Goodreads platform (cf. Rebora et al. 2018; Kuijpers et al. 2024). Second, the construction of a multilingual corpus of book reviews to study the reception of the same narratives across cultures and languages (cf. Herrmann et al. 2024). Third, the comparison of literary evaluation practices between professional and non-professional book reviewers (cf. Salgaro and Rebora 2019; Rebora and Vezzani 2024).

All projects will be presented by highlighting the theoretical and methodological issues they raise for comparative literary studies.

ID: 1085 / 303: 2

Open Group Individual Submissions

Topics: G23. Digital Social Reading and Comparative Literary Studies - Rebora, Simone (University of Verona)

Keywords: Dracula, Dracula Daily, Textual Authority, Documentation, Participatory Reading

Documentation, Textual Authority, and the Digital Afterlife of Dracula

Hyun Kyung Jung

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This paper examines how Bram Stoker’s Dracula constructs textual authority through documentation and how contemporary readers engage in a similar process through Dracula Daily (DD), a viral digital serialization. Dracula is a novel deeply concerned with documentation, textual authority, and the collaborative construction of knowledge. Through its epistolary form, Dracula foregrounds the selective nature of documentation and raises questions about knowledge production. Notably, Dracula is never given an independent voice—his presence is mediated through others, and his words are transcribed or paraphrased. This erasure highlights the novel’s broader epistemological concerns: how does textual mediation shape knowledge? Who constructs history, and whose narratives are omitted? As I argue, Dracula is not merely an epistolary novel but a metatextual exploration of textual authority, where meaning is co-constructed by both characters and readers.

Building on this, my paper further explores how contemporary readers engage in a similar act of collaborative textual construction through DD, which reconfigures Dracula into a chronological, episodic reading experience. By delivering passages from Dracula as emails corresponding to their in-text dates, DD’s fragmented format compels readers to engage with the text in real time, mirroring the novel’s documentary structure. This fosters Digital Social Reading (DSR) by creating an interactive space where readers analyze, reinterpret, and expand upon the text. Through social media sites like Tumblr and Twitter, readers collectively reframe Dracula, generating discourse through memes, artwork, and analyses that challenge conventional interpretations. Such engagement reconstructs Dracula as an evolving cultural artifact subject to ongoing reinterpretation and communal knowledge-building.

Traditional literary criticism has positioned reading as a solitary, hierarchical act, where textual authority is centralized within the author’s intent or academic discourse. However, the popularity of DD has fostered a networked reading environment where readers actively shape the text’s reception and meaning. In this way, the project mirrors Dracula itself—just as Stoker’s characters compile disparate documents into a unified narrative, modern readers collaboratively construct meaning from fragmented textual updates.

This paper situates DD within DSR, arguing that such practices challenge the authority of printed texts while expanding how literature is consumed and reimagined. By examining how Dracula’s fragmented structure lends itself to digital serialization, I demonstrate how contemporary reading practices echo the novel’s preoccupation with documentation and knowledge production. Ultimately, I argue that Dracula is an inherently incomplete text—one that becomes fully realized only through the participatory engagement of its readers, both in the nineteenth century and in the digital age.

ID: 529 / 303: 3

Open Group Individual Submissions

Topics: G23. Digital Social Reading and Comparative Literary Studies - Rebora, Simone (University of Verona)

Keywords: Fan Fiction, Paratext, Main Text, Real Audiences, Digital Social Reading

Fan Fiction as Paratext: An Intervention of Real Audiences in the Narrative Process of Storyworld

Yunqian Wang

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Genette’s concept of paratexts originally emphasized elements mediating between a primary text and its reception. With the advent of digital technology, online literature—particularly fanfiction—has evolved this concept, transforming passive consumption into active audience participation. Fanfiction, unlike Genette’s framework where paratexts align with authorial intent, allows audiences to reinterpret and expand narratives, creating dynamic interactions between original texts and their derivatives that enrich the story world.

This research explores the potential of fanfiction as a unique paratextual phenomenon, analyzing how real audience involvement transforms narratives from “closed texts” to “open works”. Fanfiction, as a derivative of various classic stories, operates differently from the original text, as readers create new works based on familiar characters, events, and themes. In this process, real audiences are integrated into the narrative, diverging from traditional “text-centered” or “author-centered” approaches. My corpus is based on prominent examples of fanfiction on the Chinese Internet for classic Chinese and foreign IPs, including works such as Harry Potter, the superheroes of Marvel, and the works of writer Qiong Yao. Examining how

these reinterpretations reveal broader shifts in social and historical consciousness. Key questions addressed include: How does fanfiction fill narrative gaps left for strategic purposes? How does it redefine the roles of readers, critics, and authors in shaping collective identities?

To align with Digital Social Reading (DSR) panel, this study examines how readers on DSR platforms participate in narrative processes through fanfiction, creating new textual dimensions. The creation, reading, and commenting on fanfiction have transformed traditional individual reading behaviors into a social experience, offering unique perspectives for reevaluating texts. This study particularly addresses how "fanfiction as paratext" uncovers the digital "afterlives" of literary works and challenges the arbiter status of traditional literary criticism. Additionally, it analyzes how these social platforms foster new approaches to studying reading habits in a big data context, showcasing the emotional and cognitive dimensions of narrative interaction in digital settings.

This research aims to enrich the field of comparative literary studies, particularly in the area of digital social reading, demonstrating how audience-driven creations enhance literary engagement and foster dynamic dialogues between critique and creation.

ID: 1606 / 303: 4

Open Group Individual Submissions

Topics: G23. Digital Social Reading and Comparative Literary Studies - Rebora, Simone (University of Verona)

Keywords: Sentiment Analysis, ChatGPT, Reader Reception, Asian American Literature, Celeste Ng

Empathy, Curiosity, and Critique: An AI-driven Mapping of Reader Responses to Asian American Literature via ChatGPT

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To uncover how ordinary readers engage with Asian American literature, this research conducts ChatGPT-assisted sentiment analysis on online reviews of Celeste Ng's novels, which represents two narrative motifs in Asian American literature— one focused on Asian American experiences and the other situated in a multicultural context. Through keyword analysis, the study identifies prevalent themes in reader reviews, including overall evaluation, opinions on literary elements such as characterization, plot, theme, setting, and authorial style, as well as comparative discourse on Ng's work. Sentiment calculation on these themes provides a fine-grained reception analysis, revealing the affective and critical undercurrents within the reviews. A comparative analysis of the two narrative motifs demonstrates their distinct affective impacts on readers. The narrative centered on Asian American experiences tends to evoke a pronounced empathic response, particularly among readers who share similar backgrounds or experiences with the fictional figures. When the narrative transcends to a multicultural context, readers underscore the importance of skillful plotting in arousing and satisfying their curiosity. However, both modes of Asian American writings elicit dissatisfaction with abrupt endings, reflecting readers' expectations for resolutions to real-life conflicts and clarity in characters' epiphanies. These findings suggest that to captivate readers, authors must create relatable characters, craft compelling plots with unexpected developments, provide sensible resolutions to conflicts, and clarify moments of character revelation. Methodologically, this study showcases the potential of ChatGPT for literary criticism, especially enabling the identification of affective trends based on large-scale reader responses. While this study focuses on Asian American literature, its approach and findings may inform broader discussions about reader engagement in multicultural and diasporic narratives.

