

# The Political Novel in Europe and the Challenges of the Digital Era

This collection aims to explore the literary and political challenges the digital age poses for the genre of the novel. Without a doubt, it is having a profound impact on all aspects of the literary process, opening up a new context that redefines creative processes, reading practices, distribution methods, and critical reception. Digital issues and practices affect fundamental notions of literary studies. But how are these changes reflected in the novel itself? How has this new context redefined relations with the political sphere (if at all)? What kind of political novel is possible in the digital age?

**Audience:** Scholars • Teachers and educators • Students • Artists

## Curated by

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## Ivana Perica and Aurore Peyroles: The Political Novel in Europe and the Challenges of the Digital Era: An Introduction

Working Paper

**The Political Novel in Europe and the Challenges of the Digital Era: An Introduction**

By: Ivana Perica, Aurore Peyroles

Working Paper Collection

**The Political Novel in Europe and the Challenges of the Digital Era  
(Caponeu Working Papers)**

By: Ivana Perica, Aurore Peyroles

# **Anna Murashova: The Digitalization of the Novel and platformization of cultural production: Practices, Hierarchies, Texts. The Russian Case**

Anna Murashova analyses Russian self-publishing literary platforms as spaces where political and cultural dynamics intersect. Her essay explores how these platforms have evolved amid Russia's tightening digital control, especially after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, and how they reflect gendered divisions and national identity. While often dismissed as lowbrow or escapist, the popular texts on these platforms offer marginalised voices a space to express personal and political experiences. Simultaneously, the study shows that these platforms, once seen as arenas of creative freedom, are increasingly constrained by state politics and cultural norms.

Working Paper

## **The Digitalization of the Novel and Platformization of Cultural Production: Practices, Hierarchies, Texts. The Russian Case**

By: Anna Murashova

# **Isabell A. Meske: Response to Anna Murashova's contribution**

In her response to Murashova, Isabell A. Meske draws parallels with historical examples of exile and oppression, as well as contemporary phenomena in the so-called 'west' (e.g. Kindle Direct Publishing) and in China. She also raises the pedagogic question about how digital platform-based literary consumption leads to less linguistic complexity among young readers and writers alike.

Working Paper

## **Response to Anna Murashova**

By: Isabell A. Meske

# **Puo-an Francisca Wu Fu: Digital Platforms and the Geopolitics of English in Mithu Sanyal's Novel "Identitti"**

Puo-an Francisca Wu Fu takes Mithu Sanyal's novel "Identitti" as a case study for understanding the role of digital platforms and the English language in contemporary German academic and anti-racist discourse. It argues that English, particularly in its U. S. form, functions as a geopolitical "supra-language" that shapes political identity, academic legitimacy and internet culture. Through the protagonist's journey, the novel reveals how English dominates online activism and university discourse, often serving as a symbol of imported authority and community.

**Puo-an Francisca Wu Fu: Digital Platforms and the Geopolitics of English in Mithu Sanyal's Novel "Identitti"**

## **Joana Roqué Pesquer: Digital (Paratextual) Economies in And Other Stories and Jessi Jezewska Stevens's "The Visitors" (2022): Between Autonomy and Subsumption**

Joana Roqué Pesquer demonstrates how small presses operate not just as cultural institutions but as sites of negotiation between economic structures, sociopolitical commitment and literary experiment. She also analyses the political novel by Jessi Jezewska Stevens *The Visitors* which is saturated with the syntax of programming languages, database queries and machine logic, both on a paratextual and textual level, revealing a fault in digital infrastructure as a system that promises coherence but delivers only selective readability.

Working Paper

**Digital (Paratextual) Economies in And Other Stories and Jessi Jezewska Stevens's "The Visitors" (2022): Between Autonomy and Subsumption**

By: Joana Roqué Pesquer

## **Sophie Salvo: Impotent Forms: "Crabwalk" and the Political Novel**

"Crabwalk" is Günter Grass's book that is set most immediately in the present, and that most directly takes up the present's political concerns, such as the rise of the far-right in Germany, the internet as a breeding ground for right-wing hate. In her analysis, Sophie Salvo asks: What does it mean, then, that in a text so clearly intended to become part of public political discourse, Grass chooses a mediocre writer to be its narrator? Although "Crabwalk" is set at the very beginning of the digital age, the effect of the internet on political discourse and its monopoly on the political imagination are already palpable.

Working Paper

## **Impotent Forms: "Crabwalk" and the Political Novel**

By: Sophie Salvo

# **Elias Kreuzmair: Response to Sophie Salvo's Contribution**

In his response to Sophie Salvo's contribution, Elias Kreuzmair suggests broadening the discussion by taking into account the complex media discourse beyond the book-internet binary; the interplay of genre, media, and gender; and the political potential of the media in building communities. He emphasises the importance of considering how literature circulates and engages with other media, and how it reflects on these processes of interaction and circulation in order to highlight its political significance.

## **Response to Sophie Salvo**

By: Elias Kreuzmair

# **Verónica Paula Gómez: Beyond the Idea of Nation: The Political Domicile of Digital Literature in the Interzone**

Verónica Paula Gómez explores how the idea of nation, that has been considered obsolete for some time, is being reshaped in today's geopolitical cyberspace. Gómez claims that digital literature disrupts the traditional connection between the novel and the nation-state by proposing a new "political domicile" called the interzone. Unlike printed national literature rooted in territorial sovereignty, digital literature – through its intermedia forms, code-based language and networked production – exists in a decentralised, transnational cyberspace. By analysing two digital works ("Writers Are Not Strangers" and "novelling"), Gómez shows how these texts challenge linearity, fixed authorship and national identity. She concludes by calling for a rethinking of literary categories and emphasises the political implications of form and media in the digital age.

Working Paper

## **Beyond the Idea of Nation: The Political Domicile of Digital Literature in the Interzone**

By: Verónica Paula Gómez

# **Liam Connell: Response to Verónica Paula Gómez**

In his response to Gómez's essay, Liam Connell questions whether the democratic potential of internet-based texts still holds in an era dominated by the reassertion of big tech and private property – which calls into question the utopian quality of the communicative infrastructure we commonly refer to as the internet. He also considers whether postcolonial novels have already achieved the kind of deterritorialisation that Gómez ascribes to electronic literature: "Translation technologies may promise to achieve something more but would that re-enshrine national belonging or further disperse the reader from a national frame?"

## **Response to Verónica Paula Gómez**

By: Liam Connell