

Latent Structures of Intertextuality in French Fiction

How literary recognition and subgenres are framing text similarity

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Structuralist background

Intertextuality

- Kristeva's theory : « Every text is a mosaic of quotations »
- **Explicit vs. Implicit Intertextuality**

Textuality

- Literature as an evolving system
- Latent frames of the system : Institutions, Book market, Readers

Aim of the paper - Examine the roles of subgenres and canonization in shaping text similarities

Canon and Genres as Structuring Elements

Canon

- Canonical works as a set of cultural reference points
- Unconsciously defining literary norms - *Cultural grammar* (Altieri, 1983)

Genres

- Genette's *architextuality* i.e. subgenres crystallizing intertextuality
- System of subgenres - an evolving structure that depends on the cultural context

Corpus and Metadata Construction

Corpus Overview

- **Source :** 19,240 texts from Gallica
- Filtered to 12,176 novels with adequate OCR quality
- Spanning 1600 to 1950, with focus on 19th-century texts

Metadata Construction

- Genre labeling with SVM classifier trained on adventure novels
- 1,083 canonical vs. 11,202 non-canonical works

Embeddings & Cosine Similarity as a proxy to measure intertextuality

- SOTA contextual encoder model as a text representation tool
- Fine-tuning M3-Embedding model on French literary language
- **Query** : a paragraph; **Pos** : 5 subsequent paragraphs; **Neg** : 5 random paragraphs
- **Assumptions** : Embeddings capturing notions of individual style, but also thematic similarity

Sanity Check for Model Validity

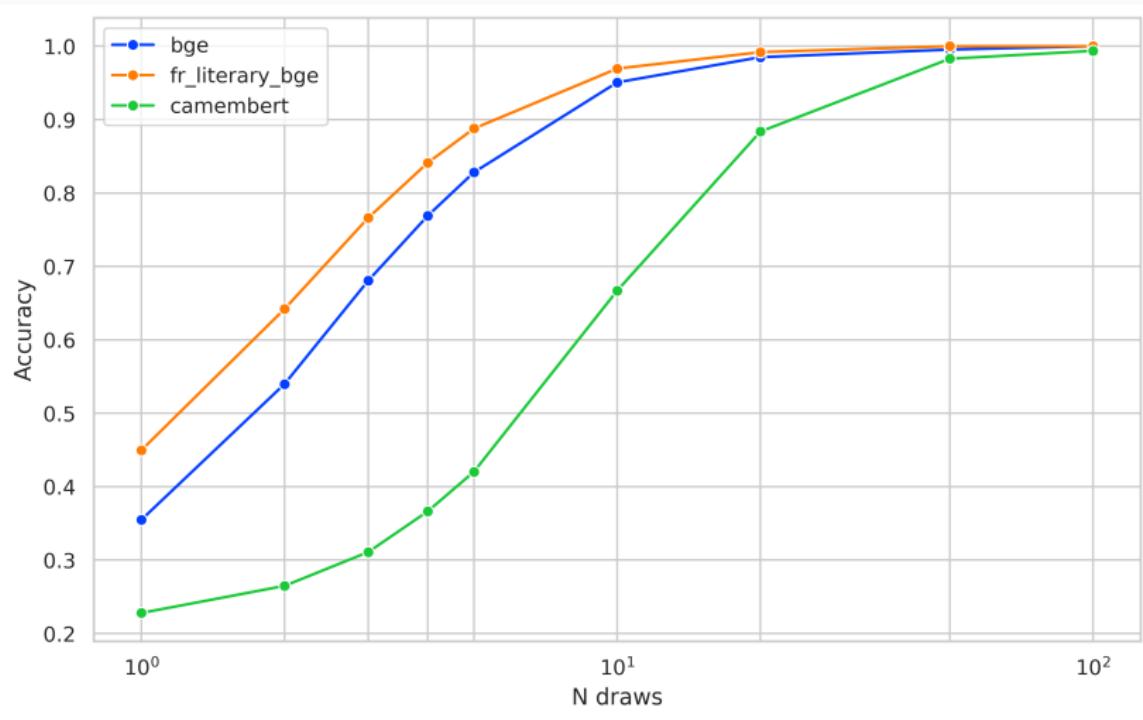
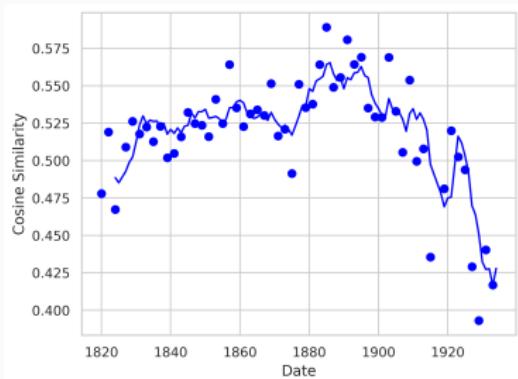
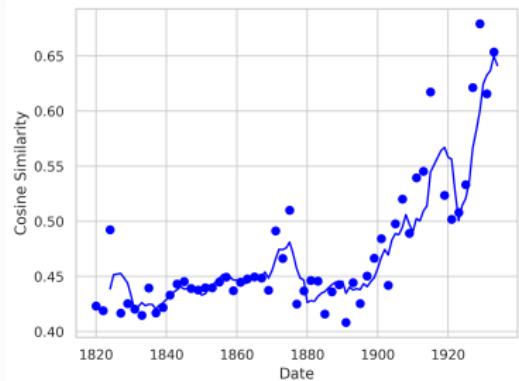


Figure 1 – Sanity check accuracy

Individual trends



(a) Cosine similarity over time for Hugo's *Les Misérables*



(b) Cosine similarity over time for Leroux's *Le mystère de la chambre jaune*

Results : Mean Similarity Over Time

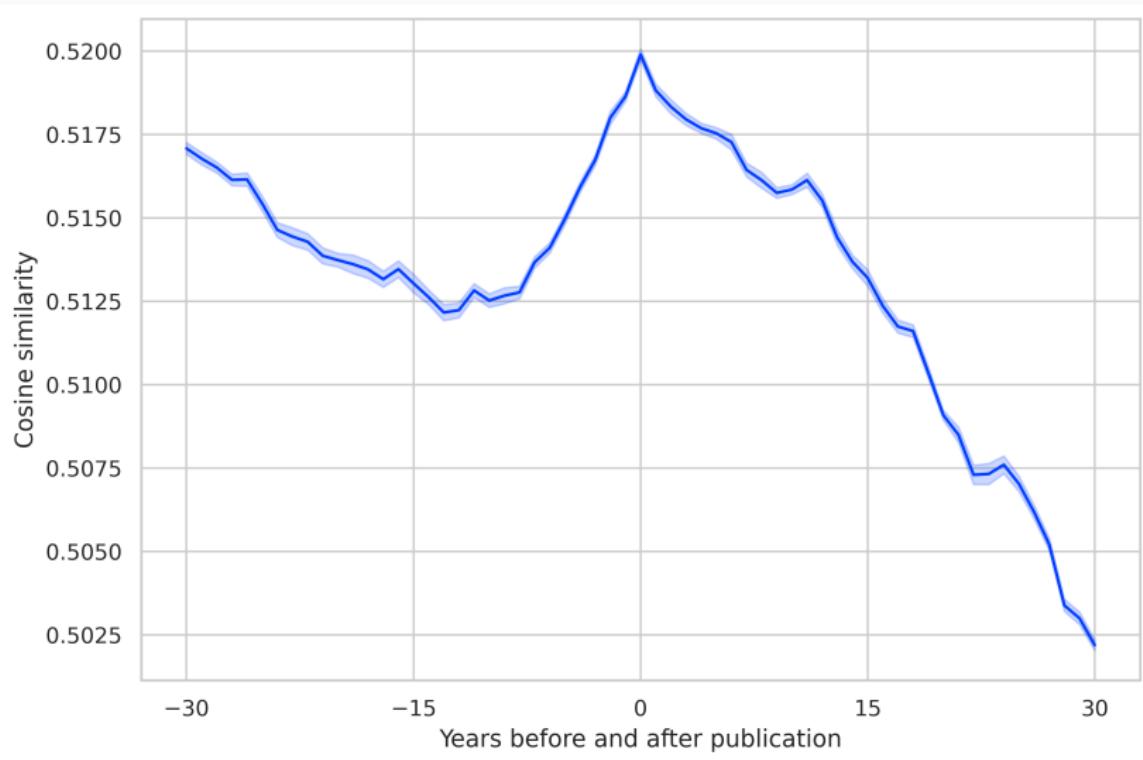


Figure 3 – Temporal similarity trends in the corpus

Results : Canon vs. Archive

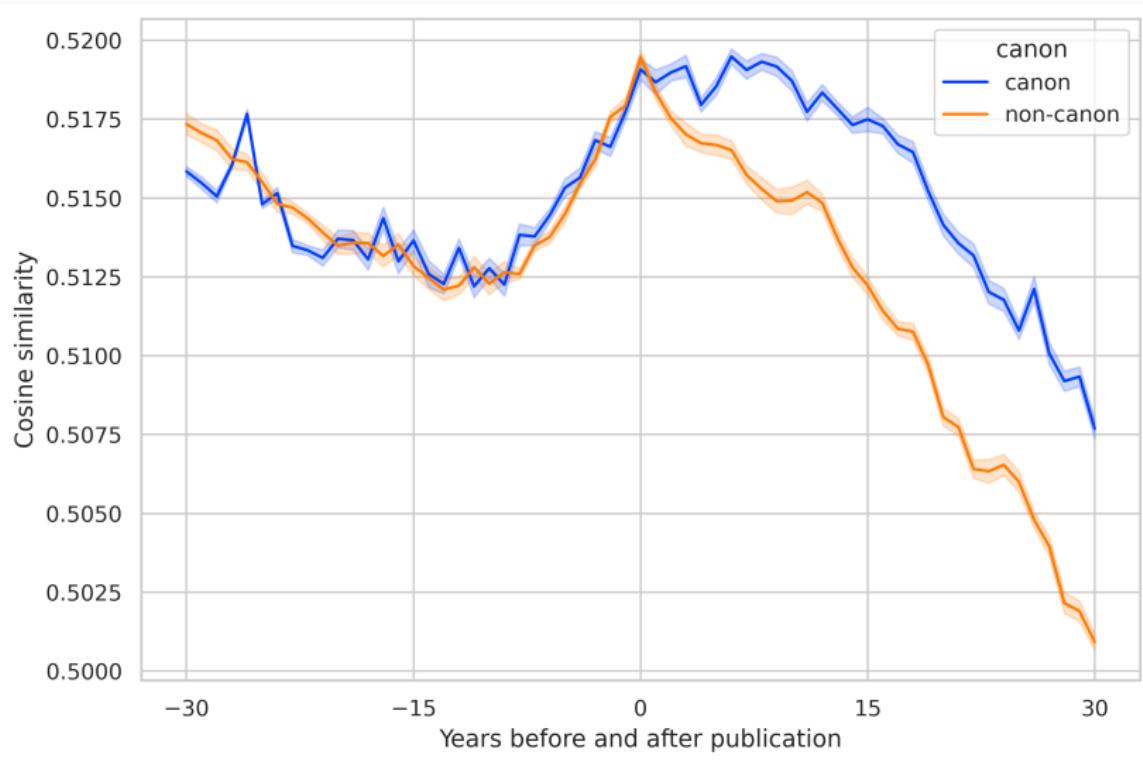


Figure 4 – Impact of canon on textual similarity over time

Results : Genre Dynamics

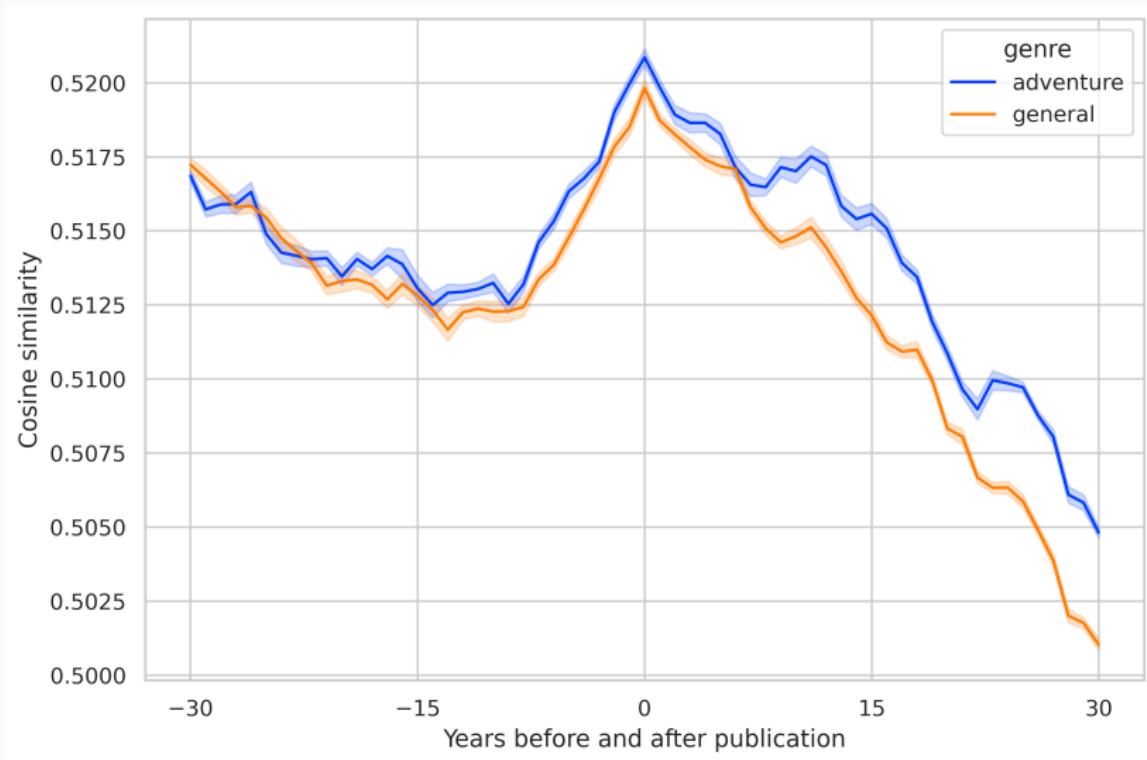


Figure 5 – Impact of canon on textual similarity over time

- Canon and Subgenres as underlying frames of text similarities
- Intertextuality as a theoretical background for CLS
- Potential for focused sub-genre studies and refined passage-level analysis

Q & A

Feel free to reach me !

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Data & Code :

https://github.com/crazyjeannot/CHR_latent_structures

Model :

https://huggingface.co/crazyjeannot/fr_literary_bge_base