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INVITATION TO THE LECTURE
IN CONTEXT OF THE IDE AUTUMN SCHOOL 'DIGITAL EDITION'

DISTANT READING DIGITAL TEXTS

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Jan Rybicki is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Modern Languages at the Pedagogical University of Kraków, Poland; he also taught at Rice University, Houston, TX. His interests include translation, comparative literature and humanities computing (especially stylometry and authorship attribution). He has worked extensively (both traditionally and digitally) on Henryk Sienkiewicz and the reception of the Polish novelist's works into English, and on the reception of English literature in Poland. Rybicki is also an active literary translator.

Distant Reading, Macroanalysis, Stylometry and Computational Stylistics are strongly overlapping terms that are often used almost as synonyms. They all apply various computational quantitative methods to gain new insights into literature, and they depend on digital texts of all kinds, from plain text files to heavily marked-up digital editions, for what to distant-read, analyze, and measure. Despite growing empirical evidence and often spectacular (or at least visually-striking) results, challenges to these non-traditional studies of the literary art include obstacles to accessibility of the texts, an uncertain theoretical basis and an uneasy relationship with mainstream humanities. This presentation presents examples of what can or cannot be done to texts with quantitative methods and attempts to address some of the above challenges.

