

Doctoral Symposium

Title:

100 Years of Dystopian Novels: A Computational Literary Analysis of Core Primitives

Abstract:

Dystopian novels of the 19th and 20th century are likely to share the same topics. Some of these topics, which express a negative world view and anxieties of the societies depicted in the novels, have been the focus of literary scholars since the late 20th century. In the recent years, computational methods became increasingly popular for analysing large amounts of text, and the corpora chosen for analysis include both factual and fictional literature. But to which extent can these technical tools be used for analysing fiction? The project aims at investigating several computational methods—namely, topic modelling, topic detection and tracking, difference analysis, text reuse detection, neural networks and word embeddings, and sentiment analysis—to compare the findings that can be generated using these techniques. During the process, a careful manual investigation and interpretation of the results is indispensable, which emphasises the importance of the literary scholar's expertise that is needed for this project.

Biographical Note:

I am Melina Jander and I am working as a research assistant in the Early Career Research Group eTRAP (electronic Text Reuse Acquisition Project), headed by Marco Böhler. We are an international and interdisciplinary team, bringing the skills of humanists and computer scientists together. We are based in and affiliated to the University of Göttingen. My academic background lies in German Philology with a focus on German Literature; besides, I have a Bachelor Degree in Cultural Anthropology. What brought me to Ghent is a U4 fellowship, which supports young researchers to gain international experience and to network with researchers outside their own comfort zone. Since April 2017 I am working on my project, with a special focus on broadening my computer skills.