

Pressemitteilung**Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen (KWI)****Helena Rose**

12.02.2025

<http://idw-online.de/de/news847380>

Wissenschaftliche Tagungen
Informationstechnik, Kulturwissenschaften, Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaften, Sprache / Literatur
überregional

**Workshop: New Reading Scenes. On Machine Reading and Reading Machine Learning Research**

27-28 February 2025 Online (Zoom) & Ruhr University Bochum (Room GB 8/129) Reading has undergone dramatic transformations over the past few decades. Media and literary theorist N. Katherine Hayles has discussed how forms of reading, modes of attention, and even neurological architecture are heavily influenced by the medium of reading—on screen vs. on print—and its media-specific features such as layout, typography, and the presence of hyperlinks (Hayles 2012; 2021). Under “machine reading,” Hayles refers to machines’ ability to process vast amounts of text and uncover patterns that would be imperceptible to a human reader.

Additionally, the ability to search for keywords in digital texts facilitates a form of “distant reading,” enabling readers to engage with texts in new ways by adopting abstract, visual, quantifying approaches (Moretti 2013; Jänicke et al. 2015).

Recently, literary scholar Julika Griem has proposed to analyze what she calls “reading scenes,” where the practice of reading is explicitly thematized in literary texts and visual media. This media reflexivity enables us to analyze the changing forms, valuations, and norms assigned to reading as a cultural practice (Griem 2021). Griem’s approach asks us to attend to the technical, social, and cultural contexts of the practice of reading in addition to its cognitive dimensions.

The emergence of large language models has transformed modes of reading and introduced new forms of attention and valuations. Traditional reading methods such as “close reading” that relies on an inquisitive and cautious analysis of a short passage—a reading that pays attention to the formal and rhetorical dimension of a piece of text—competes with automated tools that establish the relevance of the components of a text through the statistical weighing of its constitutive elements. The shifts in reading raise a series of critical questions:

What forms of reading are automatized through machine processing? What cultural, technical, ethical, and economic valuations are encoded into these machine reading scenes? What are the normative implications behind machines’ “interpretation” of what counts in a text and the reduction of texts to containers for information?

Do close reading and the reading of longer texts, both of which require sustained attention, lose their status as foundational skills to be learned in educational settings? Do reading competencies become superfluous as machines automate the reading process?

Since computer science literature is a scene on which AI gives an account of its “paradigmatic worldview” (Amoore et al. 2023), what forms of reading might researchers of the humanities and social sciences develop in order to engage with computer science research, which is often outside their traditional fields of expertise?

How does machine translation, as the foundational problem of large language models, relate to human translation as a reading-writing practice that accounts for specific temporal, geographical, and affective contexts? What are the implications of reducing these contexts to the “highest likelihood” norm of machine learning?

CONCEPTION & ORGANIZATION

Katia Schwerzmann, Thyssen@KWIFellow

Workshop of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in cooperation with the SFB 1567 Virtuelle Lebenswelten, Ruhr University Bochum

PARTICIPATION

The workshop is a public event. If you want to participate please use the link provided on the KWI website. For online participation (Zoom) use the link published on the website at the given time.

About the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI):

The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen, Germany, is an interdisciplinary research centre following the tradition of international Institutes for Advanced Study. In its role as an inter-university institution connecting the Ruhr-University Bochum, the Technological University Dortmund and the University of Duisburg-Essen, the institute works together with researchers and scientists from its neighbouring universities as well as other partners from the federal state NRW and places in- and outside of Germany. Within the Ruhr area, the KWI is a place to share and discuss the questions and results of ambitious research with interested parties from the city and the greater region. Currently, work at the KWI focusses on the following areas: “cultural studies of science and science policy making”, “sociology of literature and culture”, “science communication”, “visual literacy” and a “teaching lab”. Projects in the established research field “culture of communication”, as well as individual projects, will be continued.
www.kulturwissenschaften.de

URL zur Pressemitteilung: <https://www.kulturwissenschaften.de/veranstaltung/workshop-new-reading-scenes/> The Workshop on the KWI website

Keynote:
N. Katherine Hayles

Speakers:
Deanna Cachoian-Schanz
Alex Campolo
Christoph Engemann
Moritz Hiller
Rainer Mühlhoff
Florian Sprenger
Katia Schwerzmann

27.-28.2.2025

New Reading Scenes: On Machine Reading and Reading Machine Learning Research

Hybrid Workshop
Conception and organization by **Katia Schwerzmann**
*Workshop of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen
In cooperation with the SFB Virtuelle Lebenswelten, Ruhr-Universität Bochum*


INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED
STUDY IN THE HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE RUHR


Sonderforschungsbereich 887
VIRTUELLE
Lebenswelten

Live: Collaboration Space GB 8
129 Ruhr-Universität Bochum
Virtual: Zoom
Registration [Link](#)

Poster Workshop New Reading Scenes
Katia Schwerzmann, KWI