Universität Basel

Research Project

WordWeb / IDEM: A new way of representing Intertextuality in Drama of the Early Modern Period

Third-party funded project

Project title WordWeb / IDEM: A new way of representing Intertextuality in Drama of the Early Modern Period

Principal Investigator(s) Rosenthaler, Lukas ;

Project Members Hohl Trillini, Regula ;

Organisation / Research unit

Departement Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften / Fachbereich Englische Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft

Fakultär assoziierte Institutionen / Imaging software/databases (Rosenthaler)

Department

Project Website https://wordweb-idem.ch

Project start 01.11.2018

Probable end 30.04.2020

Status Completed

WordWeb/IDEM proposes an innovative flexible structure for representing intertextuality to display a comprehensive corpus of mutual quotations in the drama of Shakespeare's time. Within the relational paradigm of traditional databases, it has been extremely challenging to map complex intertextual references. Thanks to new information technologies, we can offer a generic digital framework for representing interrelated information which overcomes these limitations. The collaborative and competitive canon of the London theatre scene around 1600 will serve as a "real world" example of relations between multiple texts.WordWeb/IDEM's main objectives will significantly advance Digital Humanities and the study of early modern literature. (1) To develop and implement WordWeb, a software framework which can model complex intertextual relationships in any cultural domain. (2) To harness 200 years of research for an unprecedented overview of Intertextuality in Drama of the Early Modern Period (IDEM).(3) To clarify Shakespeare's contribution to the overall "web of words" of his time.The project builds on experience gained from the HyperHamlet database (SNF Project Passages We Live By 2006-2010), a hypertext of Shakespeare's tragedy in which each line gives access to texts in which that line is quoted. In contrast, WordWeb/IDEM will make cross-references between the works of dozens of dramatists visible as an extended verbal and social network. WordWeb can renew our vision of intertextuality through a groundbreaking new paradigm for representing what is conventionally called "quotation". Instead of complete texts, Word-Web/IDEM will store only intertextually active passages, i.e. phrases which have been identified in more than one text. These items are not seen as deriving from a famous masterpiece. Instead, they represent much-quoted phrases which just happen to occur also in Hamlet, for example. The name "WordWeb" indicates this new focus: short verbal items ("Word") are connected to each other by rich links that carry bibliographical information and other annotations ("Web"). By storing only shared passages, WordWeb/IDEM will have room for an open number of texts that quote and are quoted and so present an extensive overview of the verbal network of Renais-sance drama. Such a coherent view is urgently needed. Thousands of references between Elizabe-than and Jacobean plays are lost from view because they are reported in hard-to-access footnotes, indexes and detailed studies. WordWeb/IDEM will make this extremely valuable, extremely specific data accessible and set them in context. A digital "semantic web" with sophisticated options for visualization will relate older, philological research to recent digital investigations and set Shakespeare's works in the context of his contemporaries. As a result, connec-

tions and influences will emerge that have remained invisible because of fragmented research. IDEM's multidimensional map of the dense tissue of verbal "memes" in early modern drama will revolutionize our under-standing of one of the most significant bodies of English literature. As a new methodology, Word-Web can be applied to advance research and understanding of complex relationships in many cultural domains.

Add publication

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners