

Probability Designs: Literature and Predictive Processing

How do fictional, narrative texts tie into our sense of what is likely? What are the designs that literature has on the way in which we think, feel and experience while reading?

About the Project

We think, move and perceive the world with an eye on what is next and correct our predictions in exchange with unexpected observations and events, according to recent proposals in neurosciences, cognitive science and philosophy of mind that come under the tag of “predictive processing”.

Probability Designs asks the question of what happens when we replace the sensory stream of the world through which we move with the sensory stream of words on the pages of a novel. What if your prediction errors have been designed? *Probability Designs* develops a sustained conceptual account of the role of predictive, probabilistic modes of thinking can take in the analysis and appreciation of literature.

The book manuscript revisits notions of

- plot (and how they provide carefully calibrated trajectories of prediction errors)
- immersion in the fictional world (and how readers adapt to the probabilities of invented realms)
- intertextuality (and how the web of texts provides readers with expectations)
- the place of literature in the world (and how designed manipulations in written texts take probabilistic cognition into unexpected places)

Probability Designs engages in the ongoing interdisciplinary dialogue around predictive processing and underlines the specific contribution that literary study has to make to it.

Publications connected to *Probability Designs* include:

Kukkonen, Karin. "Bayesian Bodies: The Predictive Dimension of Embodied Cognition." In: Peter Garrett (ed.) *The Embodied Mind in Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016: 153-169.

Kukkonen, Karin. "Presence and Prediction: The Embodied Readers' Cascades of Cognition." *Style* 48.3 (2014): 368-384.

Kukkonen, Karin. "Bayesian Narrative: Probability, Plot and the Shape of the Fictional World" *Anglia* 123.4 (2014): 720-739.

Kukkonen, Karin. "Quixotic Reasoning: Causation, Counterfactuals and Literary Storyworlds." *Paragraph* 37.1 (2014): 47-61.