

Book Reviews

Deirdre Shauna Lynch

Loving Literature. A Cultural History

Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015

Loving Literature answers the question why those of us whose line of work is literature are not only required to love it but also ensure that others do too. Deirdre Lynch keeps a critical distance from her love of literature that allows her to engage with the texts that she analyses while at the same time reinvigorating the literary-critical enterprise of which she is both a part and a product.

Focusing on the literature of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, *Loving Literature* demonstrates that this period produced a new, romantic idea of literature. It is no coincidence that the period was a watershed in the history of the emotions and intimate life; its literature, argues Lynch, can only be understood when viewed in the context of the history of emotional practice. It was at this time that literature became available to readers as private, passionate people rather than as rational, civic-minded ones. Lynch views literature as an object that solicits its audiences' involvement, affection and fidelity. For literature to be taken personally, she argues, it demands love. Even when we aspire to scientific objectivity as critics, we do so because we love literature. This is a fundamental assumption of *Loving Literature*; it is also one that comes with a warning: love can be pleasant but it can also be confusing and painful.

While early discussions of literary history and the canon have focused on the conditions which established literature as an object of knowledge, Lynch focuses on how we "feel" literature: knowing and feeling, she argues, are inextricably linked.

In the eighteenth century, literary texts were bound up with their writers' identities. They placed emotional demands on the reader that made it difficult for critics to decide the extent to which they should allow their own feelings to impinge on their critique. She illustrates this challenge with reference to the battle between James Boswell, author of *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, and the poet Anna Seward. While Seward, a passionate reader and critic, accused Samuel Johnson of failing to love literature sufficiently, Boswell defended Johnson by arguing that critics should not be prejudiced or have favourite authors.

Lynch also discusses nineteenth-century book collectors and the concept of "bibliomania", a passion for collecting books that bordered on madness. She argues that book collecting was an amorous activity that reinforced literature's status as a love object. By conserving great books, the present and the past are kept in sync as readers return to their favourite books. Reading is a gentle pleasure and source of enduring companionship. The novel, argues Lynch, is the fullest expression of the love of reading.

A recurrent topic of *Loving Literature* is how the language of approbation or admiration of works of literature is found insufficient "and recourse is had to the stickier, subjectivity-saturated language of involvement and affection" (10). In the eighteenth century, the human heart was re-mapped and served to personalise the passions; in the nineteenth century, concepts of domesticity in literature brought what Lynch describes as "loving

feeling” into a new and potentially problematical relationship with habit and routine. As literary study was professionalised it became increasingly important to understand what Lynch terms the “personalisation” of literature and the practices and institutions of reading by which it was supported. Love of literature collapses time and connects the living and the dead. *Loving Literature* explores how this is done as it investigates what it means to have an emotional commitment to literature.

In part one, “Choosing an Author as You Choose a Friend”, Lynch investigates the personalisation of literature, focusing on the earlier mentioned quarrel between James Boswell and Anna Seward. Part two, “Possessive Love”, examines the fantasy of being left alone with the canon as it discusses eighteenth-century men of letters who wrote at a time when literary history was understood as an exercise in public service. This part considers anthologists and essayists such as Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt and Thomas De Quincy. Part three, “English Literature for Everyday Use”, explores the regular, the routinised and the habitual in literature and how one forms a steady relationship with poems, letters and novels. The novel, more than any other literary form, has the potential to be a reader’s companion for the long haul: it occasions a love that is uncalculated and habitual.

Loving Literature is cultural history at its best. Infused with enthusiasm, it is scholarly but also accessible thanks to the clarity of its style and the richness of its examples. Meticulously annotated and with carefully chosen illustrations, Lynch’s study is a pleasure to read. *Loving Literature* is sure to attract readers from inside and outside the Academy who question the idea that literary scholars do not love literature and who wish to explore why and how they can refute this popular misconception. Loving literature entails close study of what literature has to say not only about the beauty of love but also its edginess and complexities; Lynch’s study helps us do this, and to enjoy doing so as part of a voyage of discovery that is continuous and endlessly rewarding.

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Victims vs. Killers in the British Press. Naming Strategies in Murder Reports

Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2014

The titles of linguistics monographs rarely attract the attention of non-expert passers-by, let alone pique their curiosity to find out more. However, *Victims vs. Killers in the British Press* could well represent an exception. Not all the passers-by attracted by this striking title might ultimately find their expectations met, yet the scope and focus of the publication may find an appreciative audience even beyond the target readership of linguists, (critical) discourse analysts and media discourse specialists.

The study is grounded in mass media discourse – namely in the language of news reporting in three British daily newspapers – and it provides an analysis of the noun phrases in

the headlines, leads and body copy which refer to the main protagonists of the events – victims and killers respectively. However, before readers are acquainted with the research and a discussion of its results, they are gradually and systematically introduced to the field, with the author providing insights into a variety of current linguistic approaches and discussing a range of aspects that are pertinent to the extralinguistic context. This balanced and well-written account facilitates the reader's understanding of the detailed analysis which follows – even for less experienced scholars or for those experts whose specialization lies outside the scope of linguistics or discourse analysis. The author characterizes critical linguistics as well as critical discourse analysis (whose methodology she applies), and she gives a thorough description of an array of concepts used by contemporary grammarians to define the noun phrase and modes of its realization; it is Quirk's approach which she adopts in her analysis, as it corresponds best with the aims of the research.

The material surveyed includes four British newspapers: the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Mirror*, and the *Sun* – in other words two broadsheets and two tabloids. The selection of news articles consists exclusively of “reports on sentences and verdicts in murder cases involving children” (64), mostly involving cases in which children were the victims of their own parents or of juvenile delinquents. The composition of the corpus thus adds an extra layer to the research objective – an analysis of noun phrases representing the key actors of the events reported – inspiring three contrastive points of view: an exploration of contrasts between the ways in which reporters refer to victims and murderers, a comparison of the noun phrase realizations in broadsheets and tabloids, and finally a study of how the construction of the victim's and the killer's identity is developed in broadsheets and tabloids across the generic stages of newspaper reporting, i.e. from the introduction in the headline, through the specifying summary of the lead, to their presence in the body copy of the report. Whereas the first two contrasts receive close attention in the monograph, the last one remains on the margins, lacking a deeper discussion; this may be seen as an impetus for follow-up research elaborating on conventional features as well as individualizing elements in the structure of the genre under examination.

The relatively small size of the corpus – 10 reports, making up a total of approximately 25,000 words – is compensated by the use of two other corpora from two different research projects, which are brought into play as comparable research data. The comparison reveals some interesting distinctions: Jucker, surveying broadsheets and tabloids but including texts from a variety of thematically diverse sections containing more than 40,000 noun phrases, arrived at fairly similar quantitative results, indicating that simple noun phrases prevail over complex noun phrases. However, Biber's findings, based on a large corpus of almost 5,500,000 words, ignoring the differences between quality and popular papers as well as between sub-genres and topic areas, suggested the very opposite tendency, with modified noun phrases (about 60%) predominating over simple ones. As Jančaříková aptly observes, these contradictory results may indicate that the size of the corpus can influence the findings yielded by its analysis, at the same time documenting the inner diversity of news reporting discourse. The difference in findings may also be interpreted as an illustration of the fact that an analysis of an undifferentiated corpus (disregarding genres, topics and other contextual variables) may lead to a misrepresentation of the actual structure of its parts.

Taking advantage of the limited size of the corpus, the author offers a meticulous quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. Even though the research objective focuses on noun phrases (exploring the choice of nouns and their modifications), the occurrence and distribution of pronominal reference is also taken into consideration and included in the quantifications.

The survey of the alternation of nouns and pronouns in reference to victims and killers demonstrates their important contribution to the construction of identity in the reports, showing the impact on the reader's stance towards the individuals concerned. In the representation of the victims the percentage of pronominal reference rises with the "tabloidization" of the paper, and throughout the corpus the pronominal reference to offenders exceeds the pronominal reference to victims; this eloquently complements the differentiation between the positions of the victims and killers that was shown by the nominal reference analysis. A comparison of the occurrence of pronouns in headlines, leads and body copy revealed the most conspicuous dissimilarities in the Sun: the emotionally loaded nominal expressions in the tabloid headline and in the lead are here in sharp contrast with the detachment of the frequent pronominal reference in the body copy, where emotionality is replaced with matter-of-fact brevity. Although registered and counted, pronominal references are not included in the qualitative analysis; their frequency is only explained in terms of their cohesive role. As the cohesion itself is created with equal effectiveness by lexical devices in the texts, this explanation would not sufficiently account for the frequency and distribution of pronominal references; the choice of cohesive elements is inevitably a stylistic choice.

The monograph is a valuable contribution offering an in-depth analysis of a number of essential aspects of mass media discourse and opening up new questions for further research. I heartily agree with Renata Jančaříková that "representation of people in newspaper discourse is a fascinating field of study" (153), and I am sure most readers of her book will feel likewise.

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