

allows for individual narrative arcs and even heroism at the level of the novel, while attesting to the power of something grander than the individual at the level of the series. As we're faced anew with the question of how to balance a single individual's disruptive claims against long-standing institutional norms, and whether or not to fear a bureaucratic "deep state" operating independently of executive power, Trollope's formal negotiations take on fresh power.

#### NOTES

1. Anthony Trollope, *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864; London: Everyman, 1994), 714.
2. "Full Transcript and Video: James Comey's Testimony on Capitol Hill," *New York Times*, June 8, 2017.
3. Carolyn Dever, "Trollope, Seriality, and the 'Dullness' of Form," *Literature Compass* 7, no. 9 (2010): 861–66, 862.
4. Frank E. Robbins, "Chronology and History in Trollope's Barset and Parliamentary Novels," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 5, no. 4 (1951): 303–16, 308.
5. Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Redux*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 278.
6. Anthony Trollope, *The Duke's Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 488–89.



## Literature

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TO begin, if we merely say that literature, in the sense of "written work valued for superior or lasting artistic merit,"<sup>1</sup> has been a major disciplinary shibboleth of the last thirty years and leave the reader to imagine an entry on literature as it might have appeared in 1987, or 1993, or 2005,<sup>2</sup> "literature" could then work as a placeholder for debates about canonicity and prestige that have since become part of a wider disciplinary self-conception. Here, I suggest that the relevance of the term now lies both in its apparent contrast with other forms of writing and

in the way different types of literature are distinguished from one another. The *Oxford Historical Thesaurus* gives twenty-eight entries under headings of “types of literature,” including “highest class” and “inferior,” as well as “satiric,” “folk,” “ancient Latin and Greek,” and so forth. That is, the word “literature” is useful in drawing distinctions not only of value but of genre and provenance. The question about literature in the nineteenth century was often not *whether* a text was “literature,” but what *kind* of literature it was. What if the key feature of literature has really only ever been the modifier that precedes it?

If “literature” is a word whose main significance might actually lie in the adjectives that qualify it, then the most useful history of the word now accounts for it primarily in terms of the company it keeps. Computational text analysis helps restore this word to nineteenth-century discursive contexts. In a presentation called “Around the word «littérature»: The English case,” Mark Algee-Hewitt, Ryan Heuser, David McClure, and Franco Moretti developed (effectively) a series of snapshots of discourse from the narrow perspective of a string of characters: l-i-t-e-r-a-t-u-r-e.<sup>3</sup> Their work lets us see what McClure calls “marquee-level changes in its use,”<sup>4</sup> in particular the emergence of the idea of literature as *belles lettres* traced by Raymond Williams and others,<sup>5</sup> and it also draws our attention to the presence of the word in discourses about classicism, pedagogy, and nationalism. That is, literature with its modifiers helps us see past the genres we impose, if only by suggestive, implicit contrast. The language in which a text is written, the culture it hails from, or the commercial or pedagogical context of its circulation might each be considered a top candidate for the most salient feature of the texts we study, and a distanced perspective on the word lets us see all those uses at once.

This particular string of characters helps us read as Linda K. Hughes argues that we should: “sideways, including analysis across genres.”<sup>6</sup> Though Hughes argues in favor of nondigital methods, I follow Anne DeWitt in suggesting we orient ourselves sideways by using computational methods to develop a picture of the landscape of nineteenth-century discourse.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, that includes nonfictional as well as fictional genres, as the imaginativeness of fiction and poetry emerge by contrast to nonfictional genres. The essential terms of this twist on the history of this word are there in *Keywords*, in which Williams traces “the attempted and often successful *specialization* of literature to certain kinds of writing.”<sup>8</sup> Williams’s entry on literature reveals how imaginative writing came to be recognized as literature, “affected by an emphatic definition of appropriate subject-matter.”<sup>9</sup> The key distinction in Williams is between

imaginative books and the “concepts of *writing* and *communication*” they seem to exclude, a point that is increasingly relevant institutionally—at my university, English and mass communication are separate departments, and our program has separate tracks in literature, writing, and film and digital media. Conceptually, too, it matters, because establishing that “literature” is always a subcategory of a larger body of texts supplements the sense that students are majoring in specialized imaginative literature with a sense that they are being taught to make distinctions, broad and subtle, to help organize the mass of texts they encounter.

The thing, literature, evokes some of the same cultural crosscurrents as the canon debates—arguments about cultural capital, about the relation of class and personhood to knowledge, about nationalism and imperialism—in nonliterary contexts. By looking for the word everywhere at once, we can see how it once circulated—and continues to circulate—more broadly as a way to designate different kinds of writing and how it might function to remind us that everything is a text. The other definition of literature I’d like us to keep in mind is “non-fictional books and writings published on a particular subject.”<sup>10</sup> The significance of these two notions of the word now to university teaching is evident in a search for “literature” on the Open Syllabus Explorer,<sup>11</sup> a collection of syllabi drawn from across disciplines. As of December 2017, the top three most-taught texts with “literature” in the title are an essay on the role of contemporary literature in the college curriculum, the *Norton Anthology of Literature*, and a book on the literature review in the social sciences.<sup>12</sup> If we consider that the dust has more or less settled around fights about the idea of literariness, taking it up again now becomes a way to see past the “irrelevance” of literature in favor of a renewed interest in the many kinds of literature that circulated in the nineteenth century and that continue to circulate around us today.

#### NOTES

1. “literature, n.,” OED Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com>.
2. Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today’s Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1991); John Guillory, *Cultural*

*Capital the Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, ACLS Humanities E-Book (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004); James F. English, *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

3. This presentation, given in May 2016, was one stage of a larger collaborative project called “Literature/Littérature’: History of a Word,” which involves researchers from the Stanford Literary Lab; the Sorbonne, Paris; Loyola University New Orleans; and the Max Planck Institute, Frankfurt.
4. David McClure, e-mail message to author, June 20, 2016.
5. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
6. Linda K. Hughes, “SIDEWAYS!: Navigating the Material(ity) of Print Culture,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 47, no. 1 (2014): 1–30, 1–2. Hughes makes an argument for “sequential rather than ‘data mining’ approaches to reading periodicals” (2), a framework that describes her method of transforming texts into three-dimensional historical debates, as when she reframes Arnold’s essays on culture as part of a longer conversation.
7. Anne DeWitt, “Advances in the Visualization of Data: The Network of Genre in the Victorian Periodical Press,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 48, no. 2 (2015): 161–82. DeWitt argues that readers create genre retrospectively in 1880s periodicals. She points out that “even the drastic expansion of the canon that Moretti calls for ignores the ‘large mass of facts’ that constitute Victorian print culture, an oversight that becomes all the more problematic given the well-established imbrication of novels with the periodical press” (162).
8. Williams, *Keywords*, 152 (emphasis mine).
9. Williams, *Keywords*, 145. “Poetry had been the high skills of writing and speaking in the special context of high imagination; the word could be moved in either direction. Literature, in its C19 sense, repeated this, though excluding speaking,” but in recent years, he adds, “literature and literary . . . have been increasingly challenged by concepts of *writing* and *communication* which seek to recover the most active and general senses which the extreme specialization had seemed to exclude” (154). He also notes that “in relation to the past, Carlyle and Ruskin, for example, who did not write novels or poems or plays, belong to English literature” (152).

10. "literature, n.," OED Online.
11. The database is designed to "enable new lines of inquiry into canon formation, the evolution of disciplines, pedagogical change, and institutional history" ("About—The Open Syllabus Project," <http://opensyllabusproject.org/faq>).
12. Thomas H. English, "Contemporary Literature," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 5, no. 1 (1939): 1–6; *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 9th ed., ed. M. H. Abrams, Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton, 2012); Chris Hart, *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination* (London: Sage, 1998). If one restricts the search to "English," the third book listed in the results is a reference source: William Harmon's *A Handbook to Literature*, 12th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2011).



## Logistics

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LOGISTICS, the art and science of efficiently managing the mobility of things and people, seems a twenty-first century phenomenon, associated with global supply chains and their emblem, the shipping container. Logistics manages the flow of production and distribution, reducing inventory costs and delivering goods just-in-time; it nimbly adjusts to fluctuations and disruptions in the supply chain, whether from under-sourced materials, workers' strikes, or software malfunctions. Though the efficient transportation of goods is as old as antiquity, it clearly accelerates after the Industrial Revolution, as part of the famous annihilation of space and time at which Victorians marveled. Steamships, steel hulls, and refrigerated shipping expanded the volume and variety of transportable goods; and modernizing national and international postal, telegraph, telephonic, and wireless networks facilitated fast flows of financial and commercial information. Moreover, the term *logistique* was a nineteenth-century one; it originally meant the supply of materiel to troops in warfare. The Napoleonic Wars made logistics a new area in the study of war, on par with strategy and tactics. Military logistics was never aloof from the movement of capital in the prehistory of