

Re-presenting the job talk topic "Reflections of the 9/11 events in the select corpus of American novels" for 21st century American cultural studies

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# 1 Meta analysis

## 1.1 Who benefits from this topic and approach?

- Which comes first: the story or life experience?
- Culture and philology
- Competitive institutions (ASA, AAS, WEF, etc.)
- 21st century LLMs and corpus analysis
  - Can't just download the answer (Plato); disautomatization (Stiegler 2018)
  - Student-centered: introduce and frame; close reading

# 2 From corpus to corporeality

## 2.1 LLMs and corpus analysis

- Can the machine do it better? A 21st century question.
- Student-sided fact-checking, interpretation, discussion, annotation
- Collective IQ (Engelbart 1962)
- *What really matters about big data is what it does* (Executive Office of the President 2014)

# 3 Culture or philology?

## 3.1 Close reading: culture or philology?

- Textual criticism (Housman 1921/1971), New Criticism, "a return to philology"? (Lieberman 2014); literary philology (Auerbach's ansatzpunkt 1969), modern philology (Sandys 1903)
- NOTE: The job search topic, in context, requires cultural reading; fiction draws on historical documents, extant rhetoric
- *to read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers* (Nietzsche 1881/1997)

### 3.2 Culture and philology: ongoing thick description

- Culture and philology (Deloria & Olson 2017; Burgett & Hendler 2007; Raymond Williams 1958/1963, Isaiah Thomas)
- Hermeneutics: prepare for text to tell us something, aware of bias, allow it to assert truth against one's own fore-meanings (Gadamer 2004)
- Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better uses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape (Geertz 19733); ongoing (Ricoeur 1986/1997)

## 4 Close reading

### 4.1 ONE example: Don DeLillo, *Falling man*, "Still-Life" for interpretation, annotation, discussion

"He takes the **binoculars** over to the Siblings'. Any idea why?"

"They're **searching** the skies."

"For what?"

"Planes. One of them, I think it was the girl."

"Katie."

"Katie claims she **saw the plane that hit tower one**. She says she was home from school, sick, standing at the window when the plane flew by."

## 5 Re-presenting the topic

### 5.1 Re-presenting the topic

- What does it mean to whom and why?
- Student-centered
- Life experience
- Cultural studies: evidence, close reading, thick description, expanding horizons
- Re-presentation (Goetz 2022; in press; in press)

## 5.2 Three-four work corpus bundles

- Investigation
- Point-of-view/identity
- Tension resolution?

## 5.3 Investigation

Mills' *All we have left*, Safran's *Extremely loud and incredibly close*, Meisner's *A fall of mangolds*, Rhodes' *Towers Falling*

- What questions and actions are involved in investigation?

## 5.4 Point-of-view, identity

Adams' *Harbor*, Hamid's *The reluctant fundamentalist*, Beigbeder's *Windows on the world*, DeLillo's *Falling Man*

- How does perspective change depending on observer or personal change?

## 5.5 Tension resolution?

Pynchon's *Bleeding edge*, Rhodes' *Towers Falling*, DeLillo's *Falling Man*

- How can the tensions of crisis play out?

## 5.6 Why corpus bundles

- Disautomatizes thought (Stiegler 2018; Plato)
- Student-centered interpretation, annotation, discussion
- Collective IQ (Engelbart 1962)
- Co-creative, co-individuating practice for associative milieus in the postdigital 21st century (Stiegler 2018 & Goetz 2021 and 2022; a 9/11 theme, e.g. Rhodes)

## 6 Conclusion

### 6.1 The purpose of this job talk

- Not to present corpus-based analysis that can be "downloaded" (Plato)
  - 21st century machines can do this better and faster, and both approaches require fact-checking for disautomatized learning (Stiegler 2018)
- 9/11 in fiction corpus as cultural-philological problem that needs theoretical teasing out
- Model close reading and class outline, supported by explanations and theory

### 6.2 Thank you

With respectful thanks for your consideration of this job talk.

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