GIORGIO GUZZETTA

Abstract: **How “distant" is distant reading?**

Since the New York Times “endorsement” in 2011, the idea of “distant reading” grabbed the attention and the imagination of digital humanists and, to a certain extent, even of the general public. The choice of the label was quite clever. The appeal is due to the claimed opposition with “close reading”, a long-established but controversial technique in Anglo-American academy (Rabinowitz 1988, 1992). Opening up criticism to the idea that “there are many different kinds of reading, which engage the reader in substantially different kinds of activity” (Rabinowitz 1992) is a welcome and refreshing notion conveyed by Moretti and Jockers. But what is really happening with distant reading? Are we actually opening up or are we locking ourselves up to an “algorithmic reader” that repeats the same process over and over again to thousands of books? Is a mechanical reader really distant from the attention to details that is reproached to close reading? In my paper I will address the question of “distance” and how it has been interpreted in literary studies and in literary work in different period, in an attempt to deconstruct Moretti’s approach.

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