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A Question of Style: individual voices and corporate identity in the *Edinburgh Review*, 1814-1820

Francesca Benatti and David King

Research question

Did the *Edinburgh Review* create a “transauthorial discourse” (Klancher 1987) that hid the voices of individual contributors behind a corporate style?

Funded by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals Field Development Grant (January-October 2017)

The *Edinburgh Review*

Most influential British periodical in early 19th C.

Edited by Francis Jeffrey, who could make alterations to any article

All articles published anonymously

Planned Corpus

Edinburgh Review:

- 325,000 ‘words’
- 60 articles

Quarterly Review:

- 175,000 ‘words’
- 20 articles

Chosen from reviews of books of literature, travel writing, history, biography

Corpus preparation

Extend corpus:

- Finding appropriate texts

Developing previous work to:

- Semi-automate post-OCR correction
- Semi-automate TEI markup
- Semi-automate quotation detection

Two interpretations of style*

Style as fingerprint

Unconscious elements in the way we write

(e.g.Van Halteren et al. "Existence of a human stylome." (2005))

Reflected by use of **Most Frequent Words**

Style as signature

Conscious choice of words, sentences, tone

(e.g. Van Dalen-Oskam Riddle of Literary Quality project)

Still **unsure** how to identify with stylometry

* as defined by Sarah Allison at DH2016, Stylistics workshop, 12 July 2016

MFW vs TF:IDF

Both attempt to remove
the influence of content over style
in the analysis

MFW

Frequent words

Choose what to *include* in the analysis

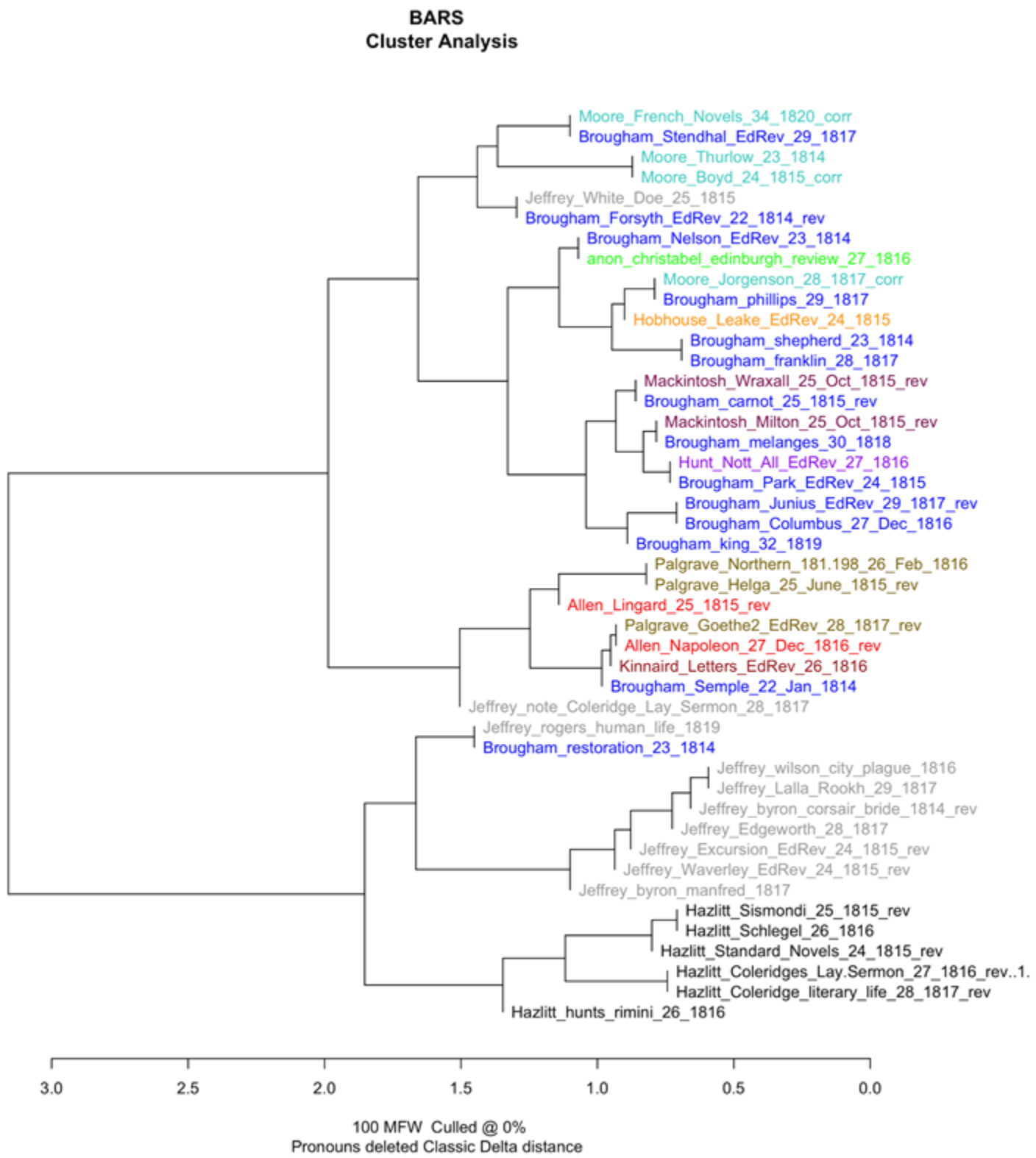
Unconscious style?

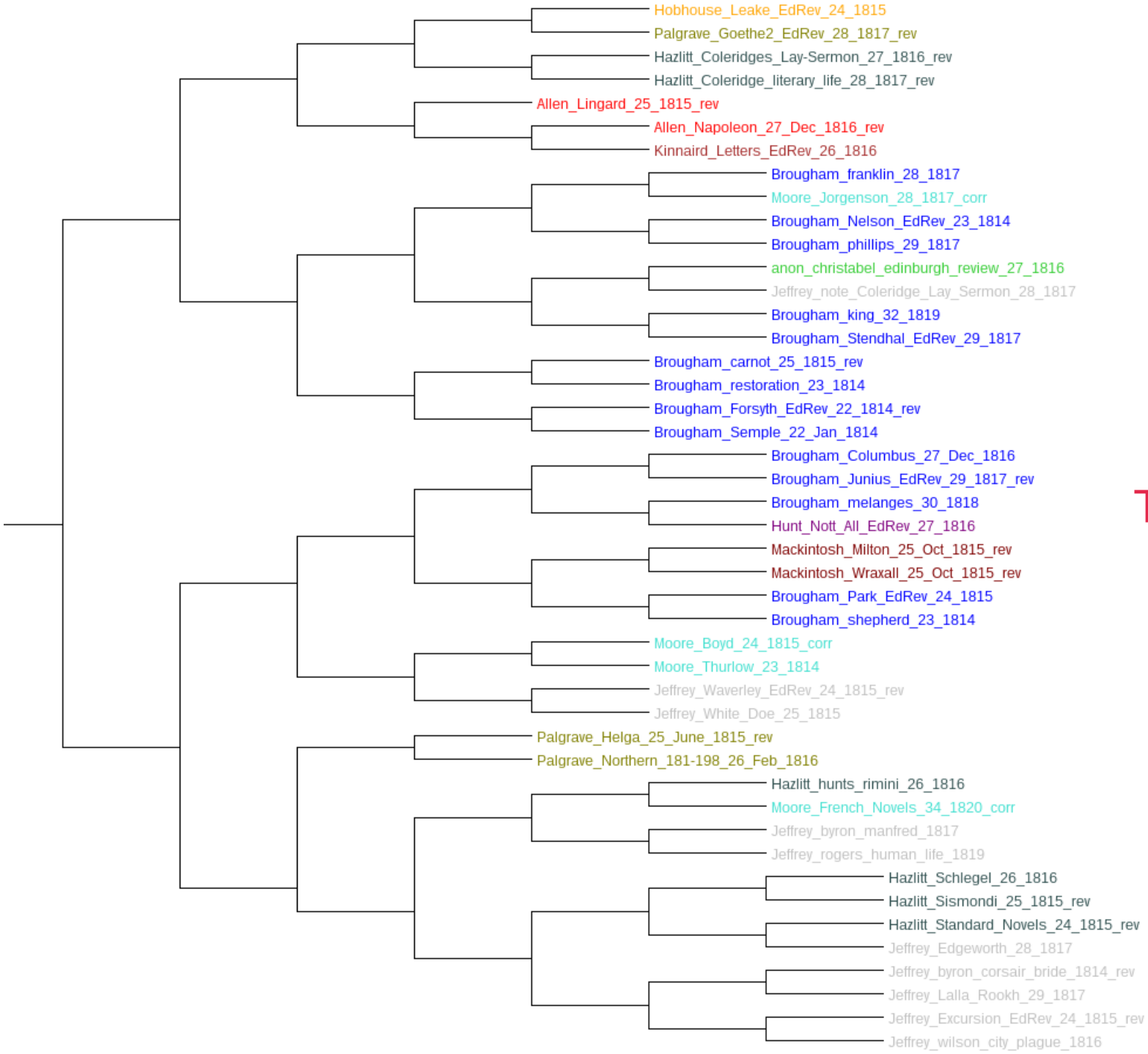
TF:IDF

Significant words

Choose what to *exclude* from the analysis

Conscious style?


BARS
Cluster Analysis
Moore_French_Novels_34_1820_corr
Brougham_Stendhal_EdRev_29_1817
Moore_Thurlow_23_1814
Moore_Boyd_24_1815_corr
Jeffrey_White_Doe_25_1815
Brougham_Forsyth_EdRev_22_1814_rev
Brougham_Nelson_EdRev_23_1814
anon_christabel_edinburgh_review_27_1816
Moore_Jorgenson_28_1817_corr
Brougham_phillips_29_1817
Hobhouse_Leake_EdRev_24_1815
Brougham_shepherd_23_1814
Brougham_franklin_28_1817
Mackintosh_Wraxall_25_Oct_1815_rev
Brougham_carnot_25_1815_rev
Mackintosh_Milton_25_Oct_1815_rev
Brougham_melanges_30_1818
Hunt_Nott_All_EdRev_27_1816
Brougham_Park_EdRev_24_1815
Brougham_Junius_EdRev_29_1817_rev
Brougham_Columbus_27_Dec_1816
Brougham_king_32_1819
Palgrave_Northern_181.198_26_Feb_1816
Palgrave_Helga_25_June_1815_rev
Allen_Lingard_25_1815_rev
Palgrave_Goethe2_EdRev_28_1817_rev
Allen_Napoleon_27_Dec_1816_rev
Kinnaird_Letters_EdRev_26_1816
Brougham_Semple_22_Jan_1814
Jeffrey_note_Coleridge_Lay_Sermon_28_1817
Jeffrey_rogers_human_life_1819
Brougham_restoration_23_1814
Jeffrey_wilson_city_plague_1816
Jeffrey_Lalla_Rookh_29_1817
Jeffrey_byron_corsair_bride_1814_rev
Jeffrey_Edgeworth_28_1817
Jeffrey_Excursion_EdRev_24_1815_rev
Jeffrey_Waverley_EdRev_24_1815_rev
Jeffrey_byron_manfred_1817
Hazlitt_Sismondi_25_1815_rev
Hazlitt_Schlegel_26_1816
Hazlitt_Standard_Novels_24_1815_rev
Hazlitt_Coleridges_Lay.Sermon_27_1816_rev..1.
Hazlitt_Coleridge_literary_life_28_1817_rev
Hazlitt_hunts_rimini_26_1816
3.0
2.5
2.0
1.5
1.0
0.5
0.0
100 MFW Culled @ 0%
Pronouns deleted Classic Delta distance



TF:IDF only
pruning
70 words

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Project blog: http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/styleproject/

Project outputs (in 2018): https://ou.figshare.com/