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## **Book Review: Balfour, J, (2022). *Representing Schizophrenia in the Media: A Corpus-Based Approach to UK Press Coverage*. Routledge.**

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*Representing Schizophrenia in the Media: A Corpus-Based Approach to UK Press Coverage* examines representations of mental illness, specifically schizophrenia, across time in tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. The book walks readers through a systematic investigation of several interlinked research questions, each focused on the techniques used in media and their consequences for public perception of what continues to be a widely misunderstood condition. Dr Balfour begins with a brief outline of schizophrenia, focusing particularly on Kraepelin's (1913) *dementia praecox* and Bleuler's (1911) *schizophrenia* concepts. The core contributions of these authors are presented, namely Kraepelin's characterisation of *dementia praecox* as a disease process and Bleuler's view of schizophrenia as involving environmental as well as biological aspects. The biomedical approach to schizophrenia is discussed in relation to Kraepelin, and a psychodynamic approach is discussed in relation to Bleuler. My only critique is that it would have been nice to see some reference to contemporary biopsychosocial approaches in addition (see, e.g., Huda, 2019). The introductory section then moves on to an overview of the British Press, covering the distinctions between tabloids and broadsheets and describing the data sources used to build the corpus under discussion. There is also mention of reporting standards and changes to the workings of press regulatory bodies in light of the phone-hacking scandal. From here, Balfour reviews past research on media representations of schizophrenia and notes an emphasis on quantitative work. This leads to a discussion of critical discourse analysis. This section is particularly helpful in explaining the theoretical orientations of applied linguists and where they depart from those of Chomsky, as well as the tendency for critical linguistics to leave the boundaries of linguistic descriptivism to make prescriptions that impact public (mental health) discourse. This section also contains a fair treatment of Balfour's positionality as a researcher and the biases inherent to the CDA position.

The next section of the introduction focuses on corpus linguistic methodologies. Here Balfour outlines his use of both CDA and corpus linguistic methods to draw on the benefits of a mixed-methods approach. Corpus techniques are used to reveal salient patterns within the texts that can be approached using CDA methods, avoiding the problems of selection common to CDA more generally. Following this, Balfour addresses various limitations. Balfour provides a clear description of the limitations of corpus linguistics from the analyst's perspective, particularly the tendency to work with decontextualised data. A clear explanation of the hermeneutic circle also features here. There is also some

discussion of methodological limitations, particularly those relating to corpus construction, such as the need to manually control duplicate articles and exclude certain terms through the use of Boolean operators. The final part of this section presents an overview of the book at large. This entails an overview of chapters that detail the various levels of analysis employed: statistical patterns, differences across newspapers, temporal aspects and change over time, schizophrenia as a metaphor, and schizophrenia as related to violence.

In Chapter 2, Balfour focuses on the labels used to refer to people with schizophrenia. This is achieved by first looking at word frequencies, collocates, and then word sketches within the Sketch Engine corpus tool (organised into grammatical frames) (see Kilgariff et al., 2014). The results of this process reveal a tendency to describe *schizophrenia* as a noun, in terms of a condition, in terms of an identity (*schizophrenic* as noun), and as a modifier (*schizophrenic* as adjective). Readers are introduced to an in-depth treatment of each usage in turn, with several illustrative examples provided alongside the relevant word sketches. In this part of the analysis, clear links to themes of danger and violence are described. Balfour also notes that the voices of people with schizophrenia are somewhat lost to their characterisation as the sum of their psychotic symptoms. This section also highlights some of the methodological limitations of the Sketch Engine's Tree Tagger, which struggles to distinguish adjective modification from apposition. The observations in this chapter are also carefully interspersed with relevant literature on schizophrenia as a whole, allowing readers to appreciate the corpus results against the backdrop of what is understood about, for example, actual violence risk in schizophrenia cohorts (which is on par with the general population).

Chapter 3 begins with a review of past research that has compared tabloid and broadsheet approaches to the representation of schizophrenia, prior to conducting such an analysis on the present corpus. This chapter provides important methodological overviews of several corpus linguistic techniques, such as keyword analyses and the Log Likelihood statistic. These descriptions are highly accessible and are of particular benefit to students of corpus linguistics embarking on similar analyses. Balfour transparently and clearly unpacks these concepts in a manner useful even to readers coming from outside of corpus linguistics. Similarly to the findings of Chapter 2, a tendency to link violence and danger with schizophrenia and psychotic symptoms is evident in the tabloid data. Balfour also highlights some newer, more positive associations between schizophrenia and art, culture, and creativity. The key differences between tabloid and broadsheet representations of schizophrenia seem to be that the former ties schizophrenia to crime and violence and deploys stigmatising language (such as *maniac* and *crazed*), whereas the latter makes greater reference to schizophrenia in the context of artistic achievement.

Chapter 4 examines reference to schizophrenia across time. Balfour divides his dataset into sixteen distinct subcorpora, one per year, and examines both the number of newspaper articles and the keywords unique to each year. This chapter provides interesting context with regard to the cultural events that surrounded various reports, such as

the release of films like *A Beautiful Mind* and *Me, Myself, and Irene*. Balfour concludes that a tendency to equate schizophrenia with violence and danger persists across the years studied, however a trend toward more sympathetic views of schizophrenia can be seen at later time points – suggesting some improvements in the uses of stigmatising language.

Chapter 5 focuses on schizophrenia as a metaphoric representation. Here, Balfour introduces the concepts of illness as metaphor (drawing on authors like Sontag and Semino) before moving to Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory as a means to understand schizophrenia as a state of internal inconsistency. This chapter also highlights the methodological challenges that corpus linguists face in trying to approach complex structures, like metaphors, computationally. Balfour overcomes this by focusing on metaphoric uses of schizophrenia that are conventional within the British press, rather than trying to exhaustively explore all metaphoric uses within the corpus. Much like in Chapter 2, this leads to a systematic treatment of schizophrenia as a noun and condition and schizophrenic as an adjective. Schizophrenia as an adjective tends to take on meanings similar to changeable and eclectic. There are less metaphoric uses associated with the noun form. In both cases, however, Balfour's suggested conceptual metaphor of schizophrenia as internal inconsistency is present and appears to be driven by the public misconception that schizophrenia amounts to a split personality. Balfour suggests that metaphors that employ schizophrenia serve to implicitly perpetuate this error.

Chapter 6 examines representations of schizophrenia in the context of horror. Parallels are drawn between media portrayals of violence and schizophrenia and the slasher movie genre, particularly the tendency to equate actors with their weapons (knife-wielding, sword-wielding, etc.) and employ language that conjures graphic visual imagery. Balfour explores the many reasons for this, ranging the availability of horror tropes to journalists looking to popularise their content and the convenient, ideological simplicity of a good versus evil dichotomy.

Chapter 7 examines media portrayals of schizophrenia in the contexts of blame and personal accountability. Balfour draws on models of blame and intentionality to illustrate how media portrayals often characterise people with schizophrenia who commit violent acts as either blameless or wholly accountable. A central point in this chapter is that journalists use language to indicate various degrees of blame and responsibility without accounting for the altered mental states brought about by psychosis.

The conclusion chapter presents a summary of the main findings alongside guidelines for journalists on reporting about schizophrenia. The main findings suggest an interesting tie between schizophrenia in the media and the themes of violence and danger. There are also some other stereotypes, more evident in broadsheets, in which schizophrenia and genius and creativity are linked. At both extremes, these representations are fundamentally stereotypes. This leads Balfour to suggest five recommendations for journalists working on reports that mention schizophrenia. The first is an appeal for a greater number of stories that humanise individuals with schizophrenia, moving away from exclusively reporting negative outcomes and particularly violent crime. The second speaks to

schizophrenia's heterogeneity as a condition and asks authors to avoid characterising individuals with schizophrenia as a homogenous group. The third asks for a separation between schizophrenia and violent crime and particularly calls for more emphasis on these cases being an exception rather than a rule. The fourth calls for greater public education efforts around what schizophrenia actually is and how violence itself is not a symptom of the disorder. The fifth calls for more direct quotation from people with schizophrenia to address the tendency for individuals with schizophrenia to appear as voiceless in many of these articles. Changing the name of schizophrenia itself is also suggested (as something Balfour suggests is approached cautiously), and there may be some benefit to this on the point of stigma. In practical terms, however, replacing schizophrenia with another term may require a deeper understanding of the condition than we currently possess. This section also addresses the unique, mixed-methodology that Balfour employs. Combining corpus linguistic approaches with CDA allowed for both quantitative and qualitative insights, and concepts from experimental psychology were introduced to explore the notion of blame beyond a purely grammatical view of agency.

One point of criticism, that I do not mean to level at the author as the book represents an enormous amount of work, is the editorial oversight. There are a number of not inconsequential errors in the typescript that should have been caught at some point in the book's production. An example is on page 54: 'Tabloids, after all, engage a certain demographic that tabloids do not.' In all cases, the author's intentions can be made out, but I am nevertheless frustrated on Balfour's behalf.

Overall, Balfour's text is a highly accessible, thoroughly transparent description of a comprehensive corpus linguistic investigation of media representations of schizophrenia. It makes for essential reading for students of applied corpus linguistics, especially those embarking on corpus work of their own. It is also written such that clinicians and journalists can take away just as much, without any prerequisite linguistic knowledge. Researchers fond of mixed methods will also find much in here in the way of a tutorial on how to combine a qualitative approach like CDA with a more mixed approach like corpus linguistics and the more quantitative traditions of experimental psychology. It is also important to underscore the positive contribution Balfour's book makes to the public discourse surrounding schizophrenia and its public perception. Balfour's take is sensitive and provides a positive framing of schizophrenia that also clearly explains why the common misconception of schizophrenia as akin to a 'split personality' is unhelpful and tied to problematic representations.

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