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Composing Digital Media

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### Final Portfolio: Written Reflection

Over the length of this semester I have really enjoyed the creative freedom this class allowed. This is because the majority of classes I have taken in college have typically not allowed much of it. As a Computer Science major I have come to associate college classes with mathematical formulas, large systems projects with every single requirement spelled out in specific detail, and programming in languages which require the strictest adherence to syntax and grammar structure. I do not necessarily consider these things intrinsically bad, but they can become tedious. While we also did some programming in this class (HTML/CSS), how exactly to design our websites was up to us, not some specification requirements sheet. And I think this creative freedom allowed me to branch out into some areas I most likely would have never have touched had it not been for this class. While creating Dungeons and Dragons battle maps might have been on my To-Do list already, editing movie posters, revising advertisements, and re-branding logos for the modern age never were. Over the course of branching out into all these different areas, I believe I have found a common theme in all my works, and this is that I am far more an innovator than an inventor.

Looking back at the revisions I have submitted for my final portfolio, none of them were really *my* creations. The Tektronix advertisement was just me rearranging the

already created poster. My current website iteration is basically just my attempt at something like the Youtube Dark theme. The Borders logos I made are just slight tweaks on the existing one and trying to add some Amazon-esque flair. The last mobile app icon design is actually just an Adobe CC 2018 logo I made without realizing it until later. Even my Dungeons and Dragons maps are not entirely mine, as they are just my visualizations of scenes and locations I have read about in countless dime-a-dozen fantasy novels. Nothing I have revised or submitted so far has been truly *original*, and in a way that echoes my sentiments about my chosen major. I have realized since starting college that my strength in Computer Science is not in pushing the field forward through research or any groundbreaking discoveries. I just like using the data structures, algorithms, and patterns that people have already invented and applying them to new pieces of software. I do not think myself a creative person, at best I am just a well-read person who has a wealth of obscure material he can freely steal from without getting caught.

In regards for what expectations I have for an audience then which might browse through my portfolio, I suppose I would want them to notice these connections. All of my work stands upon the shoulders of giants, and so I would want someone looking at my work to look down as well, to notice where all my creations stem from, and to give credit where credit is due. This hypothetical audience, then, would have to be somewhat familiar with the things I am familiar with, namely fantasy, science-fiction, and technology. I have been writing my assignments with such an audience (and reader) in mind, that my references will not go over everyone's heads, and that my blatant theft

will be called out. I do not want my work to be hailed as groundbreaking or me some creative genius, I just want it to be effective in providing entertainment or in provoking thought. Were I to write a novel, I would not want it be debated in literary circles for the next several decades, I would want someone who has just finished reading it to set it down, smile, and go on with his or her life.

In this endeavour I have been fortunate to find myself surrounded by friends and peers whom I can ask for honest opinions on my works. When creating anything I am thinking about what the person on the other end is going to be receiving, so I highly value the feedback I receive from my peers. When I design software I want to make the interface easily navigable for the end user so they have a better time using it. When designing battle maps I want to make them look “cool” for the players to heighten their experience and to serve their function in providing clear visuals. When revising advertisements I want to know if my slogan or catchphrase is going to get someone’s attention.

As for what goals I had for this class, I did not really have any. As I stated in my Written Reflection for Work in Progress 2, events in this class have not transpired as I expected. I took this class on recommendation from a friend expecting it to involve writing about digital products, though more in a way closer to critique than meta-analysis about how digital products are made. In this regard I did not expect really to *learn* anything, rather I just expected to hone my critical writing skills. However I did learn quite a bit in this class, both in terms of software skills (I had very little Photoshop experience coming in) and in terms of learning about myself.

