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ENGL 3726 New Media

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Final Project Reflection

I am genuinely glad that we could have an option to do the final submission in the form of a creative project instead of an essay since it seems wasteful to reduce all forms of digital media we learned and analyzed this semester into only one.

Through the production process of my hypertext novel, the most important point I learned is a brand-new way of storytelling. Through research to previous hypertext novel, including several online hypertext novels, Twine stories, etc., I learned that most of the novel work in the form of “choose your own adventure” and “Garden of the forking path” where the reader is choosing one of the many paths the writers set in advance. This form of storytelling intrigues me, as it actively involved the reader as the co-author of the story. However, I am not satisfied with the degree that the reader is involved. Even though the reader is given the ability to control his/her own path, the path is still set in advance, rendering the previous illusion of control obsolete. So, I “devised” (I have not found any previous work acting in this way) my own kind of hypertext story where the story progress in the Wikipedia-like way instead of the Forking Path way. The reader gets the whole story in the very first glance and the meaning of it expands as he/she learns more information. With different stopping points, readers get very different meaning out of the story for the way it is designed. So, readers are actively involved in the storytelling as how much they understand the story depends solely on how much information (levels of links) they decide to click on. Since hypertext is the foundation of all, this behavior resembles how people utilize digital media every day: everything people consume is based on something else, and as a single page of content on the internet does not make any sense standing alone, they need to expand on it to get the whole picture. But different people choose to expand to different levels, thus creating the whole new meaning of the content. This way the medium of hypertext is the message. Also, the hiding of hypertext link, including hiding of color and underline, is a very good choice not only because it will not overwhelm reader with the amount of hyperlink in one single paragraph, but also because it will make it easier to create diverse stories since the reader cannot always find all of the links and will be missing some of the information.

The form of the chosen medium lays the foundation of the digital media. Also, hypertext represents the way human’s mind works. The way and which information can be presented in a clean, precise manner depends on the hyper-textuality of the information itself. Even many of the methodologies that humans have developed over the years can be traced back to hyper-textuality. Divide-and-conquer is a perfect example for this. The way that most of the movies, TV shows, and video games can fall into this category. White Christmas, Innocence, and SOMA all have a summary main plot and the producer break the summary into very small parts and build each one of them one by one. We could see how the robot in the Heavenly Creature shows his humanity in many different scenes. Missing even one of the scenes can render us a completely different RU-4. And that’s what happens in my project.

Anyway, I am really glad I did this creative project and chose hypertext as my topic. I learned a lot from it, both from researching the history and composing it. Also, this class really rocks. Really wish I discovered it sooner than my senior year.