The map I produced was an interactive depiction of the known cemeteries in Maryland and their distances from municipality centers. This small project embraced a multimodal approach such as the one described in Collins, Durington, and Gill (2021:191) utilizing “multiple platforms, multiple media, and multiple relationships” to communicate information. The map was shared on GitHub, and made in QGIS. It is a representation of several forms of spatial data such as raster, and point and polygon vectors, that came from open sources of information. It allows others to see and begin to interpret the potential relationships of cemeteries with the rural and urban landscapes around them.

Ducke (2015) discussed some of the paradoxes regarding free and open source data for archaeologists. As the map I created was created solely by the availability of open source software and data, this holds a great deal of relevance. I also shared my map on GitHub, which is a well known software hosting site. Interestingly, doing this automatically addressed one of the issues that the author mentioned about the publishing (or lack thereof) of source code. This would also allow for the reproducibility of my project, to anyone who would wish to do so, which is an essential aspect of science and research as a whole.

González-Tennant (2016) outlined several ways in which GIS is utilized by archaeologists; namely map making, data visualization, participatory GIS, and counter-mapping. Countermapping can be a dramatic subversion of power or can be simply defined as not produced by state entities, and since I am a producer, the generated map is an example of this. The primary purpose that my map serves is to visualize data in a new way. While there is technically some geospatial analysis involved, there would need to be some investment of time and energy to fully develop an appropriate interpretation of those results. The generated map is also useful in a participatory sense because it is shared to the public, and it facilitates greater access to an important cultural resource. The action of conducting this project highlighted the importance of these factors to archaeological GIS.

References Cited

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