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ENGL 877

Reading Response 6

This site focuses on three major themes from recovered texts on One More Voice: finding one’s voice through poetry and public speaking, exploring the dangers of idol worship, and revealing hidden historical figures through found letters of correspondence. These themes are important to investigate because they primarily focus on the early black American experience through the words (both oral and written) from voices traditionally silenced or forgotten as well as those who are now household names and those who enjoyed such a status in their own lifetimes. They also spotlight the fears and religious changes before, during, and after white colonialism/colonization of Africa and the spread of Christianity among slaves, free men and women, and those who interacted with America, pointing out hypocrisy and irony. Most importantly, they take care to lift up the words and lives and experiences of traditionally ignored, erased, forgotten, or misrepresented people of color through a more modern and person-first lens. It is important to note that this is an ongoing project with many contributors, started as a graduate course assignment, so if you would like to contribute or attribute any of the words or labor, please do not hesitate to join us on our journey to bring these words and the people behind them to light.

**Mission Statement**

Work in the digital humanities is a constantly-changing field that encourages collaboration and innovation in order to further connect the world, placing as much emphasis as possible on continued education, outreach, and lifting up the voices of the oppressed, forgotten, or misrepresented.

That being said, there is still much work to be done.  Two weeks ago, we started synthesizing about the direction of this course and the overarching themes and goals affecting the world of digital humanities.  First and foremost, I am going to give credit where it is due and thank Lyette, Arka, Brett, Andrew, Greg, and Jun for their thoughts and engaging discussions in our small groups.

Some of the issues and ideas we covered were similarities across various colonial locations, definitions and portrayals of missionary work versus colonization (more specifically internalizing colonial systems and ideologies), and two other big concepts I want to further discuss.  The first major takeaway is the idea of the nuclear versus the extended family.  We have a western definition of success that simply is not applicable to a large majority of the southern hemisphere.  In the United States, we are caught in this vicious cycle or "I have to have this type of family, so I need this type of technology, which makes me use such-and-such electronic device, which helps or hinders my family plan" etc. etc. into infinity.  The video we watched also tackled this idea of being able to supply extra money to family versus being able to become an entrepreneur and actually make a decent living in what is essentially other countries' (quite dangerous) trash.  I am also starting to realize as I synthesize this idea how interconnected it is to my second major takeaway, which is the religion of technology.

In my first group, we discussed the idea of planned obsolescence for almost all of our tech (smaller therefore harder to fix without breaking, pushed updates that track but also kill your battery, the fact that we simply throw things in a drawer or drop them off without actually wondering where they will eventually end up, etc.) and in my second group, we discussed the fact that here in the United States, we are torn between the polar extremes of "nothing matters because all of our information is everywhere already" and "we should never save passwords, always shred our mail, and never give out even our address to anyone without knowing them directly."

It was mentioned that the nihilistic approach in some is necessary to keep the masses sane, but the paranoid approach in some is necessary to keep the masses safe.  Big tech has been proven, countless times, to be "the enemy" (whether it's their collection and sharing of the consumers' data in order to maximize profit, or influence elections, or stir up controversy which will correlate to higher sales, or even help commit an actual genocide).  Yet we still take advantage of them in order to make our lives easier and, in the immediate, maybe even better.  I won't lie, I love the idea of social media being free and when my professors and colleagues share something to read that is open-access.  But I try my best to use my various audiences to promote my friends and followers in their academic and creative endeavors and if I read something I really connect with online, I try to find an avenue to purchase a physical copy of the text.

Last week, we learned and further complicated (in an effort to simplify and rectify) matters by diving into the concepts of minimal computing.  Many think that minimal computing is not only part of the answer, but the answer itself.  While others are hesitant to adapt for reasons of academic pressures, monetary setbacks or barriers, or simply not having the necessary amount of education needed to do something so complex.  But we are on the right path.  Again, I feel like I've raised more questions than given answers, but I am very excited to see where this discussion heads throughout the rest of the term.

And this week, we brought it all to fruition by formatting our final OMV data sets into something more project-like, as well as reading and discussing a more praxis-based academic piece in small and large groups.  I am happy to see where this class and the work being done is going and can't wait to read others thoughts as we enter the next stage of digital humanities work.