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GSWS 1200 - Transgender Studies

<div align="center">Project Proposal</div>

Abstract

This project explores the issues related to Natural Language Processing (NLP) and gender, specifically how that relates to the gender binary, and what that means for transgender and non-binary individuals. I am particularly invested in how current NLPs function to maintain the gender binary and uphold incorrect and outdated ideas of gender identity. To do this, I use support from "If Sex is Not a Biological Phenomenon" to discuss how the depiction of gender identity on paper impacts the ability to move through life as a trans individual. I also use "Where Are All the Trans Women in Byzantium" to explore the importance of trans representation within society. "Academia" by Erich Pitcher helps provide context surrounding how academic institutions approach research and development on subjects such as NLPs. "The Transgender Turn: Eleanor Rykener Speaks Back" by M. W. Bychowski helps to make sense of why NLPs would default to only featuring cisgender individuals and how that impacts current scholarship. This work contributes to trans studies because understanding how NLPs behave in regard to transgender and non-binary individuals creates a new discourse on the interaction of technology and gender identity. Exploring this demonstrates the significance of trans studies because NLPs are used throughout our daily lives and have a considerable impact on how we function within society.

Annotated Bibliography

Betancourt, R. (2021). Where Are All the Trans Women in Byzantium? In G. LaFleur, M. Raskolnikov, & A. Kłosowska (Eds.), *Trans Historical: Gender Plurality before the Modern* (pp. 297–321). essay, Cornell University Press.

This text follows the history of the Byzantine Empire, especially as it relates to trans individuals as well as a focus on the overall gender makeup of the time. A large part of this exploration follows performance in the form of theater as it is a key indicator of how gender identity was perceived. Another key aspect is that of eunuchs and understanding how they functioned within society and how they factor into the conversation surrounding gender.

Bychowski, M. W. (2021). The Transgender Turn: Eleanor Rykener Speaks Back. In G. LaFleur, M. Raskolnikov, & A. Kłosowska (Eds.), *Trans historical: Gender plurality before the modern* (pp. 95–113). essay, Cornell University Press.

An essential topic brought up within this text is the idea of scholarship, particularly in relation to trans people, an evident example being Eleanor Rykener. It is brought up that the understanding of most scholarship is as a cisgender scholarship because cisgender is often seen as the default. Therefore, viewing topics through a transgender lens marks a shift in that understanding and therefore in most fields.

Currah, Paisley. "1 "If Sex Is Not a Biologic Phenomenon"". *Sex Is as Sex Does: Governing Transgender Identity*, New York, USA: New York University Press, 2022, pp. 31-53.

This text has a focus on the actual process for changing gender through official government means and all of the intricacies that come along with it. People wanting to change their gender identity on paper then opens the avenue for a slew of questions in response surrounding whether they should be allowed to change their sex classification. All of that leads to

the final question of what does that classification actually represent and how does biology factor into it which this text seeks to unpack.

Goldberg, A. E., & Beemyn, G. (2021). Academia. In The SAGE encyclopedia of trans studies. essay, SAGE Reference.

The central ideas of this text surround how academia both helps and hurts trans people and how it then impacts trans people's lives. Some examples include the actual production of knowledge and how producing information about under studied topics can help. The text also references certain policies and practices can help with credibility for some topics and how groups of people require specific policies in place. The text also brings up the types of oppression found within academia specifically in relation to trans people.

Outline

For my project I will have to spend some time in the beginning giving over what NLPs are and how they are important in today's society in order to give the reader enough context for the rest of the writing. There will be a section that will go into how the current systems are harmful for trans and non-binary individuals. The texts will help to create an understanding of why most NLPs are created in this way with little thought going into how they will impact anyone who is not cisgender. I will also discuss how this misrepresentation can be extrapolated to a broader sense as it shows how the default remains cisgender and unless people are actively trying to change the system it will continue to be a disadvantage for trans individuals.

For the creative element I will create a functioning Natural Language Processing model that shows how current models treat gender and then create an updated model to show how a

model could treat gender to be more inclusive. I will compare these by running them both on the

same set of texts and display the results that are outputted side by side. I will likely showcase the

actual outputs in some way, perhaps on a GitHub or a website, instead of the actual coded

models themselves but I can display small select sections of the code to give people a basic

understanding of what has been changed.