UNL Spring 2023 Digital Humanities Class Reading Responses for the first half of the semester

Decolonizing through citations

The idea of “undisciplining” Victorian Studies seems similar to an idea in sociology we have where we are seeking to decolonize sociology. Both of these disciplines are seeking to expand who they are listening to as scholars and how they interact with scholars from diverse and underprivileged statuses. One thing from the Victorian Studies article that really resonated with the practices of undisciplining is the idea of examining who we cite. This is such an interesting and clear way to motivate these ideals into practice. Most of us, who are at least working towards publications or are enough along in our academic careers to know others actively working for publications, know the broader importance of citations. There is the important idea of “don’t plagiarize” of course, but in the context of undisciplining and decolonizing, the focus idea expands to diversifying both the author and the idea. Sometimes it may be difficult to determine how an author identifies or if they occupy a minority status, but we can more easily determine if they are writing new and unconventional ideas about old things.

Drawing on the idea of “World Literature” from Tuesday’s article, expanding Victorian Studies to incorporate more diverse scholarship, aid in the decolonization of world literatures. The authors of the Victorian Studies piece make this claim clear, stating: “These attempts to think race (whether in postcolonial, anticolonial, or decolonial frames or through critical race and ethnic studies) necessarily imply an ambitious epistemic project: to shift the “geography of reason” in Lewis Gordon’s phrase, away from an oft-invisible Eurocentricity and its attendant whiteness”.

Regarding the concept of Victorian Studies, the authors of this piece are the authors of material we should be striving to cite. They explain that they want to broaden the discipline to scholars outside the traditional assumptions of who is an academic, by definition then, they are also striving to introduce more diverse ideas into the discipline. The authors of this study explain the expansion of who is being cited in Victorian Studies is a way to decolonize the field. They reveal that Victorian Studies has not cited work by black women, or really any feminists of color, which is shocking to read. They go on to explain that they want to see Victorian Studies moving towards what other fields of British literature have done in integrating scholarships such as methods and social containments into their fields.

Sociology has been having a similar discussion, especially in regard to methods, there is a really important article by Deadric T. Williams (linked here [https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-019-09538-xLinks to an external site.](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-019-09538-x)) wherein he discusses the idea that using race as a control variable for certain outcomes may actually perpetuate the expectations of the inequalities being studied by, in part,  “highlighting the racial gap in a given outcome without conceptualizing and historicizing the social construction of race” (Williams, 2019). I’m not sure what the methods and social containments of Victorian Studies are, but because of the context of Victorian England, I can imagine that the contextualization of race could be important to the field.