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2 December 2024  
Feminist Coding Practices

### ‘Coding Colonies’

‘Coding ‘Colonies’ is a live coding performance that acts as an extension of previous research, where I examine the internet and media technologies as embodiments of digital colonialism. Through this framework, modes of extraction, exploitation, and appropriation between the West and the global South have worked closely with the development of technology; the age of colonialism has not been erased but merely transformed and *codified* through embodied processes and procedures by emerging technologies. This performance then, aims to highlight the legacy of colonialism across time and (cyber)space, and to shed a light on how it fixates roles within the tech space across race, class, and gender, defining a ‘digitized’, ‘innovative,’ ‘modern’ West that both subjugates and relies on ‘pre-digital’, ‘technologically illiterate’, and ‘primitive’ global South.

To communicate this method, I draw upon poetry, spoken word, and archival footage/images. What I felt was most important in this performance was the storytelling, rather than the visuals; hence, most attention was put into what I wanted to communicate through poetry, which I then let guide the audiovisual part of the performance. Namely, I employed mixing with hydra visuals and p5.js text animations with archival videos and images of historical documentaries and films, a juxtaposition that I believe highlight the transformations in colonial practices from traditional to modern, physical to digital. Critically, it speaks to the central aspects of feminism and environmentalism on the internet, which requires that we extend our critiques of and oppression to extend beyond the intersections of race, gender, or class, and to include that of nations, regions, and geographical space.

Echoing all that we have discussed in class, this project aims more than anything to ask more questions, rather than answers. It asks how we should confront the nature of code which still places Western knowledge and standards of connectivity and access at the forefront? Who has agency and power over how different technologies are practiced? What does it mean not just decolonize, but to *decode*?

From a technical perspective, I have also considered how I can be intentional and ethical in the tools that I use. For example, all of my assets have been my own personal photos or material taken from Internet Archive. I also recorded and mixed my audio using GarageBand, which is already free on my computer.

This performance has allowed me to experiment with the expressive possibilities of live coding when it is combined with text and poetry, and I hope to continue mixing these techniques in future works. I think something as simple as text can be very powerful against a backdrop of live coding visuals that are often quite static and abstract. Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore how this work can be more collaborative, such as co-writing poetry or inviting others to record different stanzas, since currently it is being performed only by me. Finally, I think this project provides a starting point for critical conversations within the live coding community

about how digital colonialism pervades people's practices, and how we can decode the many facets of our digital lives.