**ENGL 877 Reading Response 4 by Tina Le**

This Reading Response comes from a course called ENGL 877 Advanced Topics in Digital Humanities at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Spring 2023. Each week, we do Reading Responses engaging with ideas from the texts we read that week. This is the fourth Reading Response, along with a comment I left on a classmate’s Reading Response:

**Instructions for Reading Response 4:**

As you know, this week we spent two classes sessions on group work in which you collaborated with a series of classmates. Through this work, you focused on developing a series of bullet points that might become the basis of a course "manifesto" or mission statement, i.e., a series of ideals that will guide your development of the final course project. These points, thanks to the work, also seek to synthesize the many readings we've covered in this course.

I'd now like you to move from your bullet points to an essay in which you discuss the approach you'll take to material development in this course. The essay should combine your own ideas with, as needed, reference to the course readings that inspired you.

* If you cite other works, please use MLA style and be sure to include a list of works cited.
* As we discussed, in submitting your essay you should also give some consideration to the way that you credit the classmates with whom you worked.

As always, after you submit your response, please read one of your colleagues' responses and write a short reply in which you offer some constructive feedback. Please choose an essay upon which no one has yet commented.

Specs

Undergraduates: 400 words + 100 words feedback

Graduates 500 words + 100 words feedback

In the development of our digital humanities final course project—and any other projects—we should be guided by the ideals of honoring contributions, amplifying marginalized voices, creating greater accessibility, and being critical of the technologies we use.

Collaboration is a core tenet of digital humanities (Arnold and Tilton), and honoring the labor of our collaborators is a way to uphold that tenet. The articles “What’s in a Name?” and “Intersectionality and Infrastructure: Toward a Critical Digital Humanities” both list people whose labor contributes to the success of digital humanities projects, but whose contributions might go unrecognized, such as “consultants, postdocs, or students” (Arnold and Tilton) and “contingent faculty, librarians, archivists, programmers, IT and edtech specialists” and many more (Boyles). Boyles explains that there is “an underrepresentation of women, of people of color, of folks who don’t identify with a heteronormative category in the Digital Humanities.” To make digital humanities more inclusive of traditionally underrepresented collaborators, we need to give recognition. Otherwise, only established DH scholars with notoriety receive funding for projects, reinforcing inequitable and exclusionary structures. In the conversation with Angela, Trey, and Arka, we questioned whether there exists *any* job or field that credits everyone involved. While we don’t have answers for that, we assert that our digital humanities work should challenge the notion of singular geniuses and narrow definitions of authorship.

We should work to amplify marginalized voices in the texts that we engage and the people with whom we collaborate. Digital humanities projects have the potential to broaden what counts as worthy of being studied, beyond what academia has traditionally valued. In the discussion with Akua and Lyette, we talked about questioning the assumptions of default norms of how we define and view literature. The conversation with Trey, Angela, and Arka added on to this when we discussed how the term “literature” is exclusionary because it discredits modes like oral storytelling. In “Anglophone World Literatures,” Neumann and Rippl explains that the term “world literatures” helps to decenter European literature as being the implicit default.

When we strive for greater accessibility, we should consider the accessibility of our work to broader audiences as well as the accessibility of the digital humanities field for people who want to be involved in projects. Making our projects open access is one tangible strategy. In addition, we should consider how to break down the silos of academia and community and promote our work to broader communities, so more folks who might be interested in our projects know about them and are able to access them—and are able to become involved as collaborators if they want to. While we as individuals in the class do not have power to directly change how funding works in academia, Akua, Lyette, and I discussed how we need to push for more equitable funding structures to empower more people to know about and to participate in digital humanities work and to know about the work.

We need to be critical of the digital tools that we use in our digital humanities projects. For example, some tools might reinforce a culture of surveillance (Glass) or commodifying people as data (Boyles). When we are actively mindful about the digital tools that we are using in our digital humanities projects, that can help us and others be more responsible and critical about the impacts of technology in all areas of life, not just for academic purposes.

Works Cited:

Arnold, Taylor, and Lauren Tilton. “What’s in a Name?” *People, Practice, Power: Digital Humanities Outside the Center.* Edited by Anne B. McGrail et al., vol. 7, University of Minnesota Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5749/9781452968346>.

Boyles, Christina. “Intersectionality and Infrastructure: Toward a Critical Digital Humanities.” *People, Practice, Power: Digital Humanities Outside the Center.* Edited by Anne B. McGrail et al., vol. 7, University of Minnesota Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5749/9781452968346>.

Erin, Lyette, Trey Hestermann, Arka Maitra, Akua Manieson, Tina Le, and Angela Thornburg. Personal communication. ENGL 882, UNL, February 2023.

Glass, Erin Rose. “Reprogramming the Invisible Discipline: An Emancipatory Approach to Digital Technology through Higher Education.” *People, Practice, Power: Digital Humanities Outside the Center.* Edited by Anne B. McGrail et al., vol. 7, University of Minnesota Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5749/9781452968346>.

Neumann, Birgit, and Gabriele Rippl. “Anglophone World Literatures: Introduction.” *Anglia*, vol. 135, no. 1, Mar. 2017, pp. 1–20.<https://doi.org/10.1515/ang-2017-0001>.

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Comment:

Hi Makena,

After reading your post, I'm excited to read the pieces for class next week about minimal computing. From Karmen's and your explanation, minimal computing sounds like an empowering process. Just yesterday, my Apple Watch stopped working, and I've tried all the tips posted by users online who have encountered a similar problem. The consensus among them was that if it doesn't work after those methods, it needs to be sent in to Apple to fix. It was disempowering to hear that I couldn't do anything further. It was also disheartening after reading about and seeing the video about electronic waste dumps...

The ability to fix something oneself puts control back in that person, rather than putting the power in the corporations that created the technological tool or platform. It makes me wonder about how resilient platforms like SquareSpace are—platforms that advertise themselves as being easy-to-use tools for creating websites.