**ENGL 877 Reading Response 6 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 sixth Reading Response, along with a comment I left on a classmate’s Reading Response:

**Instructions for Reading Response 1:**

As we discussed in class, for this reading response I'd like you to submit a statement that will consist of two parts:

1) Project Introduction (circa 200 words). You drafted this in class, then we discussed it and developed a series of questions that such an introduction might address, then you took your drafts and discussed them with series of your classmates, who gave you feedback. Now I'd like you to complete this process. Please revise what you drafted in class based on the feedback you received and submit it as the first part of this assigment.

2) Mission Statement (as many words as it takes). Over the last two weeks, you developed two drafts of this. As I noted in class, these drafts were very informal, directed towards me, and relied on "insider" knowledge, i.e., on being part of our class, knowing the people, etc. Now I'd like you to revise this based on the feedback you previously received from me and your classmates, so that it is "directed to the world," i.e., could go on your website and be read by any person who did not know you or anything about this class.

Note: The Project Introduction and Mission Statement should work together in that the Mission Statement should, in effect, set out the values and ideals that will guide the development of the project you outline in the Project Introduction.

Feedback (as many words as you like): Once you submit your Project Introduction and Mission Statement, please review those submitted by one of your colleagues and provide constructive feedback. Please to choose a set on which no on else has already provided feedback.

**Project Introduction**

**What:** This project explores how European religious missionaries shaped education in colonized communities in Africa and Asia.

**How:** This project critically engages with primary texts such as missionaries’ reports, students’ schoolwork, and interviews to discuss:

* What are the purposes of education, and who decides?
* What kinds of knowledge are valued or devalued, and by whom?
* How does literacy empower or control?
* How do colonial views of gender and morality impact education?

**Why:** These questions apply to teachers, students, and anyone who is interested in education. Ideas and impacts of colonialism still impact students’ experiences in school today, far beyond the specific communities explored in this project. To decolonize education in our present-day classrooms, a useful place to begin is to understand the history.

**Project creators:** My interest in decolonizing education stems from my experiences as a high school English teacher and PhD student studying writing pedagogy. This project has been shaped by conversations and feedback with colleagues in the course ENGL 877: Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The primary texts come from *One More Voice*, “a digital humanities recovery project that identifies, documents, and critically engages with the voices of racialized creators in British imperial and colonial archives.”

**Mission Statement:**

This project is guided by the value of honoring labor—in the ways we approach collaboration, strive to amplify marginalized voices, and critically use minimal computing with digital tools to develop the project.

* **Collaboration:** Collaboration is a core tenet of digital humanities, and that includes honoring the often invisible labor of contributors, the “shadow labor” that often includes emotional labor (Dombrowski). The success of digital humanities projects is due to the work of many folks, including consultants, librarians, programmers, IT and edtech specialists (Arnold and Tilton; Boyles), and conversations and feedback from colleagues.
* **Amplifying marginalized voices:** We hope to broaden what counts as worthy of being studied, make our work accessible to wider audiences, and make digital humanities more welcoming to anyone who wants to be involved. These are tied to amplifying marginalized voices in the texts we engage with (Neumann and Rippl) and those who are interested in collaborating or doing digital humanities work, regardless of whether they are affiliated with a formal digital humanities program. If you are interested in collaborating, we would love to involve you. We also hope that this project inspires you to create your own!
* **Using minimal computing with digital tools:** We strive to use digital tools and platforms that are as sustainable (Dombrowski), open access, and respectful of users’ data as possible (Glass; Boyles). As novices in web development, we use principles of minimal computing to work with the resources we have. In documenting our process, we hope that our work can be continued and others can use our process notes as a resource (Risam and Gil; Dombrowski).

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

Dombrowski, Quinn. “Minimizing Computing Maximizes Labor.” *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2022. https://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/16/2/000594/000594.html#

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

Erin, Lyette, Akua Manieson, Jeff Hill, Greg Payne, and Tina Le. Personal communication. ENGL 882, UNL, March 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>

Kawi, Terry. “Decolonizing Our Classrooms Starts With Us.” *PBS Education*, 3 Aug. 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/education/blog/decolonizing-our-classrooms-starts-with-us>.

Manieson, Akua, Brett Berg, and Tina Le. Personal communication. ENGL 882, UNL, March 2023.

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>

**Comment:**

Hi Trey,

I'm fascinated by the way you describe wanting "to highlight areas where Christian and local tradition have melded, fought, or been erased, and how that has impacted the colonial landscape." I could imagine that a potential way of organizing your project could be to use "melded" "fought" and "erased" as the categories, with examples of each.

Maybe you also saw this text in your own research, but here's a text that I found while doing research for the OMV Exploration 3 that sounds right up the alley of your project:

Nkomazana, Fidelis, and Senzokuhle Doreen Setume. “Missionary Colonial Mentality and the Expansion of Christianity in Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1800 to 1900.” *Journal for the Study of Religion*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2016, pp. 29–55. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24902913. Accessed 9 Mar. 2023.

Nkomazana and Setume argue that Batswana had existing religious traditions that contributed to how quickly Christianity spread there, despite missionaries rejecting these traditions and giving the impression that no religion existed before they arrived. This text provides a critical lens for reading the missionary reports that laud their successes in spreading Christianity.

As feedback for web-accessibility purposes, it wasn't clear to me where the "project introduction" ended and the "mission statement" began in your post—maybe some headings could make that easier for readers to navigate.

I'm excited about your project!