Fall 2017

The Digital Monstrosity

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The Digital Monstrosity
Assignment Sheet

Back in my day, using the internet meant waiting the ten minutes and 16 screeching beeps before the dial-up connector started twirling. Back then, everyone had an AIM account, a kind of archaic pseudo-communication involving almost no vowels and *many* :) responses. Of course, we sometimes had to make hard choices back in those days, usually between using the internet, making a phone call, or micro-waving some leftover bagel bites. The internet was fickle back then, and not to be trusted—if you believed your parents, which mostly we didn't.

Nowadays, the internet is different. The average person owns not only a phone that accesses the internet, but communicates with hundreds of people a day. Our president is a Twitter troll. We live in a digital age, whether we like it or not.

If you've ever read or watched or heard science fiction, you know that changing technology necessarily changes the stories we tell. Humans as a species evolved technologically in order to supplement our biology, and a huge part of that development has been in communication, in storytelling. Radio, film, video games—writing itself—are all technological improvements, and they all help us experience new and different stories. And as Lit-scholars, it's our responsibility to at least try to interpret these stories (even if they're *very* confusing to us).

So **here's what we're going to do:** we're going to tackle the prospect of interpreting digital storytelling. You're going to **find a digital story**, as best you define it. This can be a poem, or a story, or a screenplay—so long as it's "born-digital" (aka, it could not be made without using digital tools). That's the trick of it: **you're going to find a piece of digital storytelling we haven't yet discussed**, and **part of your assignment will be showing the rest of us how it works**.

Your guiding questions to ask yourself for this assignment are:

> **"How does the medium and form of a piece of writing influence me? How does the interaction invoked by Ergodic Literature influence my ability to access a piece of literature?"**

Your objective for this project is to analyze what a digital story is as you define it. You'll write a short analysis of how it works, and you'll present it to us in a short (~3 minute) demo. You can find some here: https://collection.eliterature.org/

This project (digital story presentation and meta letter) is due October 30th

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Points of Evaluation & Deliverables

The Digital Story Presentation:

- You find a "born-digital" piece of writing that shows   ___ / 2pts
  appropriate possibility for interpretation—here
  meaning the story has depth and possibility for
  literary analysis.

- You will present a demo "defense" of your found story ___ / 3pt
  on the due date (below) which will help to show
  your classmates how your story works both functionally
  and as a piece of literature.

The Meta Letter:

- Your letter is a **full page, single-spaced**.[1]   ___ / 1pt

- You discuss what the influence of your selected   ___ / 2pt
  digital story's form was on its content. How does
  it compare to "traditional" literature?

- You analyze the purpose and effect of your piece.   ___ / 2pt
  What does the piece's technologically-dependent
  aspects affect in your overall interpretation? Why
  does it appear to have been built the way it was?

                                          TOTAL: ___ / 10pts

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[1] I know this seems overly format-important, but using all of this space is crucial to forcing yourself to delve deeper into your process as a reader. This is a space for introspection, and if you short that, you learn less about yourself.

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