

Excavating Precarious Genealogies Through Digital Technologies: Black Tropes, Shakespeare's Weird Sisters and the Mythologies of the West African Trickster

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Despite documented encounters between Englishmen and Africans both on the continent and in England starting from as early as the 1500s and the existence of Black characters in early modern performances in British courts, masques and theatre, the presence of Africans is conventionally not conceived as a constitutive/formative part of the material, theatrical and epistemic realities of the early modern English age. This occlusion is partly due to the fragmentary nature of archival materials on early modern Black lives. This paper seeks to explore if and to what extent digital resources such as Google Books and British Literary Manuscripts Online (Medieval and Renaissance) can ameliorate the scantiness of the early modern archive on Black subjectivities and scrutinize the kind of knowledge they reify, engender or subvert. It thus deploys Kim Hall's "tropes of Blackness" (1995) to trace the genealogies of interconnections between Shakespeare's weird sisters in *Macbeth* and the androgynous trickster figure in West African mythologies by focusing on the relationship between racial tropes and supernatural others in the aforementioned digital resources and three posited sources for *Macbeth*, namely Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577) and King James I's *Daemonologie* (1597). It hopes to illuminate how digital tools can contribute to the discourse on the entanglements of race and gender in early modern English literature, especially as it pertains to the interpellation/construction of alterity on the English stage as well as the elucidation of the erasures that emerge from the contact zone between African cultural epistemologies and English interpretations.

Geoparsing the First Folio

Robert Ormsby

In this paper, I will tease out some of the questions central to the data-driven project I have been working on since 2018. This project involves finding toponyms and other geography-related terms in the Folio, recoding those terms in a database, and marking them with metadata. The plan is to make this material searchable through an online tool that users can employ to create visualizations of the data. This research is related to other literary-geography projects that gather information about verbal texts using geoparsing, usually defined as the process of detecting toponyms in a verbal text and then assigning the places definitive geographical coordinates (latitude and longitude). In some cases, geoparsing is automated; however, I collect vocabulary manually and it is often difficult to render the terms I gather as dots or even areas on a map. In my paper I will describe aspects of my methodology in order to think about such processes and terms as automated extraction, distant reading, data, metadata, toponym, and geoparsing and to emphasize the types of human interpretation that data collection and analysis entail.

Data on the Black Boy Bookshops of Early Modern London

Valerie Wayne

Drawing on information from EEBO, the ESTC, the USTC, the three volumes of the STC, entries in the Register of the Stationers' Company, court records of the Company, and further information from the work of Peter Blayney, this paper will compile references to the Black Boy and Black

Moryan/Blackamore Bookshops that operated in London from 1530 to 1640. The compilation will identify dates of publication, printers, publishers, locations, textual fonts (black letter or roman), and the probable genre of the texts. Many of the publications issued from these publishers were ballads. A brief account of what this information may tell us about the shops and signs associated with the Black Boy will follow the table.

Exploring the Affordances of Early Modern Data Formats

Mary Erica Zimmer

Within computational humanities scholarship, Janet Murray’s “affordances of the digital” are so frequently cited as to seem both truism and precondition for discussing potential advantages of work in electronic media. Yet should these “affordances” be seen as a matter of medium alone? Attending to the underlying “shapes” of datasets themselves—that is, the persistent forms created by their formats—helps shed light on how Murray’s “affordances” can function to distinct ends, while highlighting forms of attention these formats allow us to pay.

With an eye to how data formats may shape and enable research questions, this paper will discuss three main data objects: the plain text + .csv metadata model, the TEI (and, more broadly, XML)-encoded corpus, and, briefly, the use of RDF (Relational Data Format), with related yet distinct corpora and projects as examples. While acknowledging that matching corpus to question may be most crucial to developing useful insights, the paper will also discuss common tools through which datasets in each format may be probed, alongside linked sample queries illustrating how work in more than one format can provide multifaceted perspective.

Ultimately, this paper (and its related project, tentatively titled *Data Shapes*) urges attention to data formats due to their durability: while tools and projects change, formats remain relatively stable, and datasets remain the most frequently archived components of any early modern digital project. Learning to perceive what Murray might term “affordances of the formats” holds the potential to guide and inflect research questions of the future.

Cloning Computational Data: Using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to Understand “Talrtonizing” Style in the Works of Nashe, Harvey, and Marprelate

Bob Hornback