Jacob Pardo

Professor Fitzgerald

ID234 Digital Scholarship

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*Our Own*: A Project Proposal

 *Hemetera* is derived from the Greek word hēméteros, a plural possessive pronoun translating to “our” or “ours.” This is fitting, as the publication is truly the students’ own at Regis College. The contributions come entirely from Regis faculty, students, and alumni, and the physical releases are even designed and edited by a team of Regis students alongside a faculty advisor. However, despite being “our” literary journal, the publication is not widely known on campus; although recent publicity efforts seek to fix this, many students are unaware of the publication and would not know to submit their own work to it—even fewer would know that the journal has been published for seventy-five years.

Contributing to this issue is a lack of corpus or easily accessible library of past releases; the journal has only started publishing online as recently as 2020, with its oldest accessible entry being a poem from 2018. This means that, for those who were not around for past releases of *Hemetera*, it can be very hard to track down publications from that era. When it comes to the earliest releases of the journal, they may as well be considered lost to time. This is where a collaborative digital humanities project, first envisioned by Katherine Colglazier, comes into play. We are seeking to transcribe, scan, and publish all available past releases of *Hemetera*, in order to make them available to a broader audience. This would not only contribute to the field of literature, but bring light to a rich aspect of Regis College’s history that has otherwise been forgotten—not to mention, bring interest to the modern *Hemetera* publication.

 As stated earlier, this project would involve creating a corpus of all available *Hemetera* publications through scanning, transcribing, and categorizing. The project would even take advantage of the “Archives” tab on the publication’s website, making past works far more accessible. Currently, it is unknown how many of *Hemetera*’s past seventy-five publications are still available; our project would reach out to the Regis Library, the *Hemetera* editors, and past faculty advisors such as Julia Lisella to find as many past issues as possible. We hope to find every issue of the journal, even dating back to its very first release. These releases would be scanned to digital documents, and transcribed to make further text analysis much easier for future researchers studying the journal. They would be categorized by release year, and individual pieces from the issues would be placed into categories such as fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. A web interface would make these old releases easily accessible, and open them to a much wider audience than they have ever faced.

 With the goals of the project described, it is useful to look at the justification and scholarly contributions of the project. As alluded to earlier, this project would contribute both to the field of literature and the history of Regis College; our work would make much more accessible multiple pieces by past students, allowing researchers to study the publication much more easily. For someone making a larger project about college journals, or someone simply interested in our journal, this project would make it much easier to analyze the text from decades of publications. For Regis College students in particular, this project would help contribute to the history of the school, connecting them to the works of students who have long since graduated. For those contributing to *Hemetera* in the modern day, the project would ensure that their works are preserved, and made available to a larger audience than our small student body. It would help to call attention to the modern-day publication, helping it grow by encouraging more students to submit their own work. In short, it would make *Hemetera* more recognized inside and outside of the school.

 The scope of this project will largely rely on the amount of past *Hemetera* publications that are currently available; as stated earlier, older editions may be harder to come by. In a best-case scenario, every edition will be available—in this case, the project will be a complete corpus. Currently, our goal is to obtain as many editions as we can, scan them completely, and transcribe their contents. These contents will be categorized by year, as well as by category. As for the technical side of the project, we plan to make these editions available through a WordPress-based website. In considering this facet of the project, we are keeping in mind Johanna Drucker’s definition of a digital humanities project: as she has stated, every digital humanities project involves assets, structure, services, and a user interface (Drucker 11). In our case, the assets will be the multiple editions of *Hemetrera*. They will be structured by year and genre, with a user interface similar to that of the Women Writers Project. The site will include services such as searching and tagging, allowing for further scholarly work regarding Regis College’s literary journal.

 The timeline of this project will include the initial work for Digital Scholarship, as well as future work which will expand the scope of the project. On the week of March 29, we would like to meet with the Regis Archives to discuss their collection of *Hemetera*. Under normal circumstances, this collection would be non-circulating; however, we hope to be granted special permission to use their archives for the sake of preserving Regis College’s history. Throughout that week, we are planning to scan in as many pages as possible, and to transcribe those scans. The week after, we will work on categorizing the transcripts, and adding them to the website interface. After the Digital Scholarship project has been completed, we would take the next year to expand the functionality of the website by adding features such as visualizations of word usage, analysis of themes and genres, and search for related keywords. Over the next ten years, we would add new editions of *Hemetera*, as well as potentially expanding to other literary journals. Over the next 100 years, we hope that the project will serve as a historical resource, showing firsthand accounts from people who lived nearly 200 years ago.

 In a successful implementation of this project, anyone will be able to access old editions of *Hemetera*, easily finding the specific year or genre that they are looking for. They will also be able to use the text for analysis, making it a scholarly resource for literary research. The site will be clear and easy to use, with all its assets structured and easy to find through an intuitive user interface. We predict that Regis College will have an interest in continuing this project into the future; as a showcase of our creative history and as a literary resource, it would help draw attention to the school. It will likely be sustained by the *Hemetera* editors as they continue to add new editions, even after the creators of the project have graduated. As the journal is kept alive by students every year, so will this project. Considering the work is *our own*, this would completely fit the spirit of *Hemetera*.

Through our work, we not only want to contribute to the field of literature, but also bring light to a rich aspect of Regis College’s history that has otherwise been forgotten. This project will make decades of the school’s history open to a much larger audience, as well as allow for further scholarly contribution by future researchers. In a deeper sense, it will bring to light an often forgotten element of the school’s creative history, reviving interest in the *Hemetera* journal. As Matthew Kirschenbaum has described, English departments have been shifting “to cultural studies, where computers… become the centerpiece of analysis” (Kirschenbaum 60). This shift is crucial to maintaining the future and relevancy of *Hemetera*; digital material will not only increase the longevity of the journal, but make it a scholarly resource as well. It is this longevity, combined with the wide reach of the project, that will bring our journal to a larger audience.

Works Cited

Drucker, Johanna. *Introduction to Digital Humanities: Course Book: Concepts, Methods, and Tutorials for Students and Instructors*. First edition, Composed 2013, UCLA, 2014.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew G. “What Is Digital Humanities and What’s It Doing in English Departments?” *Modern Language Association*, 2010, https://www.ade.mla.org/bulletin/article/ade.150.55.