Title: The Annotation Project: Research in the Great Works of Literature Curriculum
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Abstract: My project involves the development of a public digital humanities space for the sharing of literary annotations and translations by undergraduate students in a world literature survey course. The website encourages discussion of literary annotation and translation as well as collaborative research and writing. For instance, in class, students analyze annotations of literary texts they are reading, considering what kind of information is included, for what imagined audiences, and to what effect. Or, they discuss the complex choices that literary translators make as they reach across temporal, linguistic, and cultural spaces in the act of translation. Then, students work collaboratively in small groups to draft an annotation plan for a text assigned to them, determining what kinds of annotations are needed to explicate and enhance the text. Over the course of the semester they do research and compose notes that provide analytical or interpretive insights; historical, social, religious, and artistic contextualization; and reflections on language use (e.g. etymologies of words and phrases) and translation choices, as well as original translations of passages.

The Annotation Project currently exists on a small scale on a CommentPress platform. I will use the grant to begin creating a new, more flexible and user-friendly website that faculty and students can use for both publishing and reading original student annotations and translations of texts that are commonly taught in Great Works of World Literature classes. I will be sharing the website with faculty across the program, not only to encourage new users but also to assess the ways that textual annotation and translation are used and discussed in classes. I will be gathering this data to determine the kinds of functionality that the new site should have to meet a range of faculty and student needs and interests.