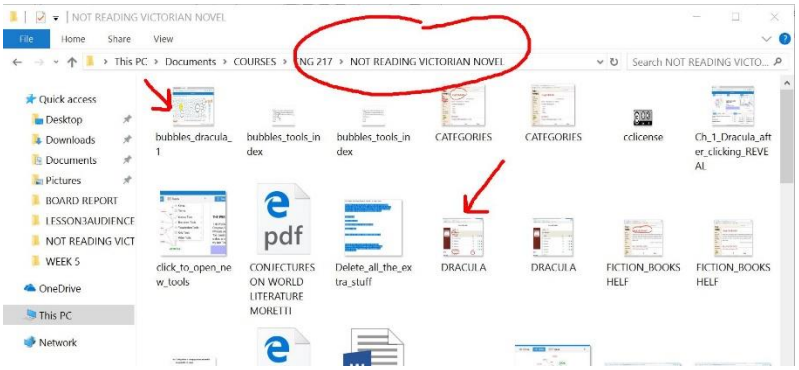
ENG 217[1] Doc McGrail Spring 2018

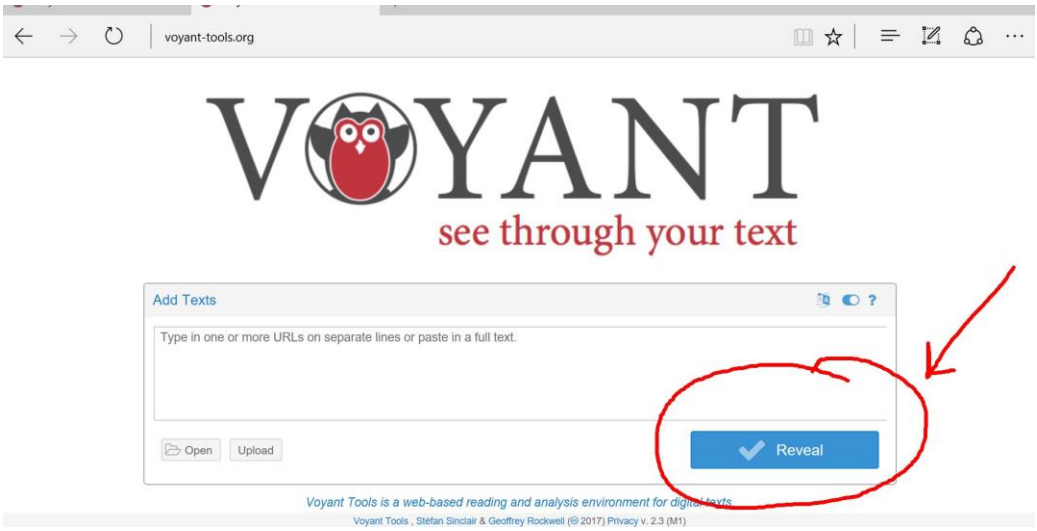
PART 2 Instructions for "Not Reading a Victorian Novel"

Distant Reading Project: Due Dates: Sunday May 6 (Grace period Monday May 7 at midnight)

Note: these instructions pick up where the Part 1 Instructions leave off.



1. Once you have made your ***predictions***, it's time to run your big Victorian novel through some tools!
2. Go to Voyant-tools.org and you'll see the following box open up for you. Be sure you see the blue REVEAL button on the right. If you don't have java script enabled, you may not see this. You might have to try Internet Explorer or Safari instead of Google Chrome if you don't see the REVEAL button.

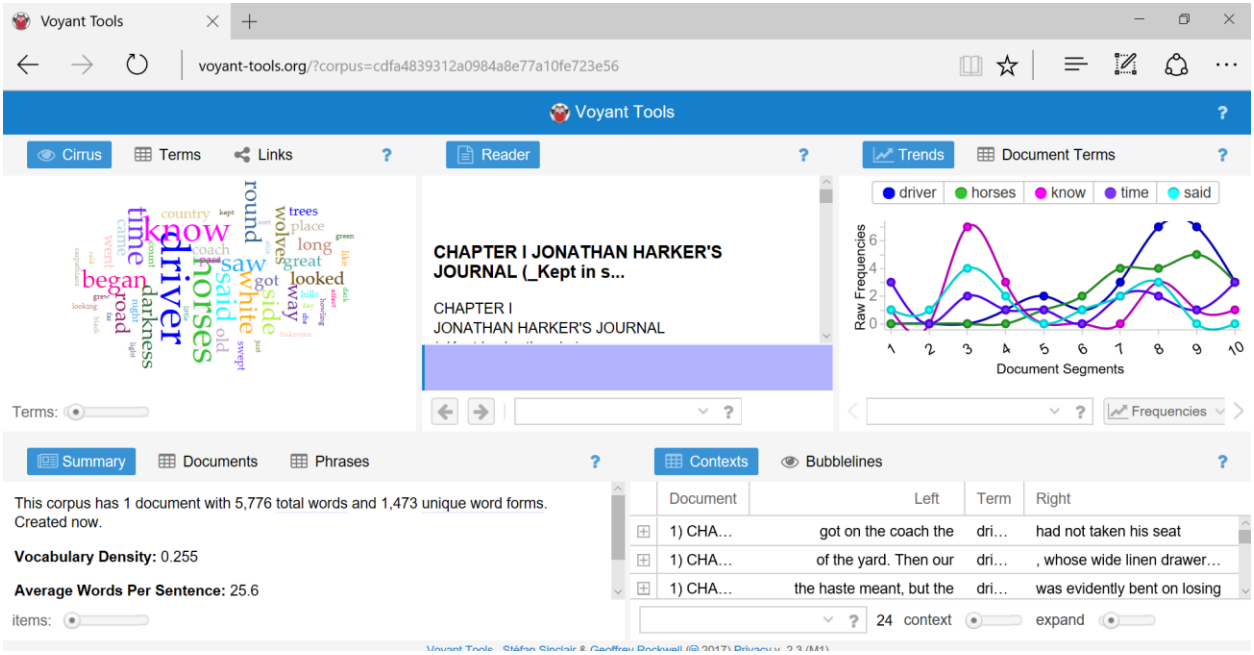


[1] This assignment relies on multiple other scholars' work with Voyant Tools, including Professor Ryan Cordell, Francesca Gianetti and the documentation for Voyant and the DWRL at UTexas. The screencaptures are my own. Information and steps are adapted with permission under a Creative Commons license.

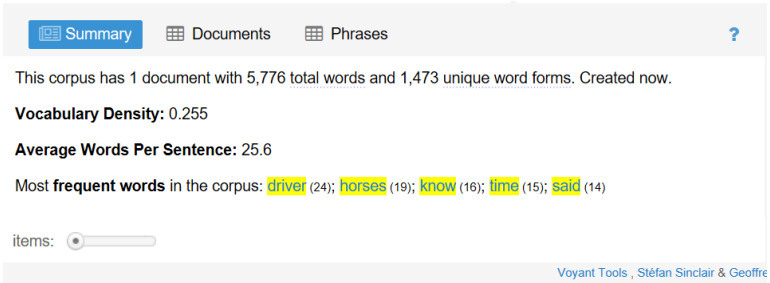
3. We'll do two different operations with Voyant-tools.org. First make a large selection of text and paste it in the white box. (You could include 100 pages or Part 1 of your novel, or if your novel is short, the whole thing1)

   I cut and pasted CH 1 of *Dracula* into the box and I got several different ways of visualizing the frequency of words in this chapter. On the left column, you see a Word Cloud, where the largest words are the most frequent ("driver" "horses" "know" bigger than "way" "road" "old"). You can see a trend graph on the right.

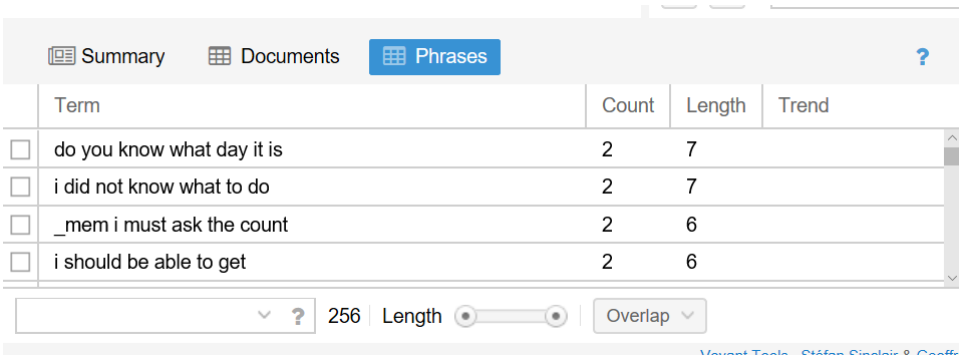
   For your blog: make a screencapture of this entire screen and save it to your new folder.



Next look at the two charts on the bottom of your screen where you see blue boxes with "Summary" and "Contexts." When I scroll down in the Summary dialogue box, I'll find the Most **frequent words** in the corpus and next to each word the # of times that word showed up: driver (24); horses (19); know (16); time (15); said (14). (See below)



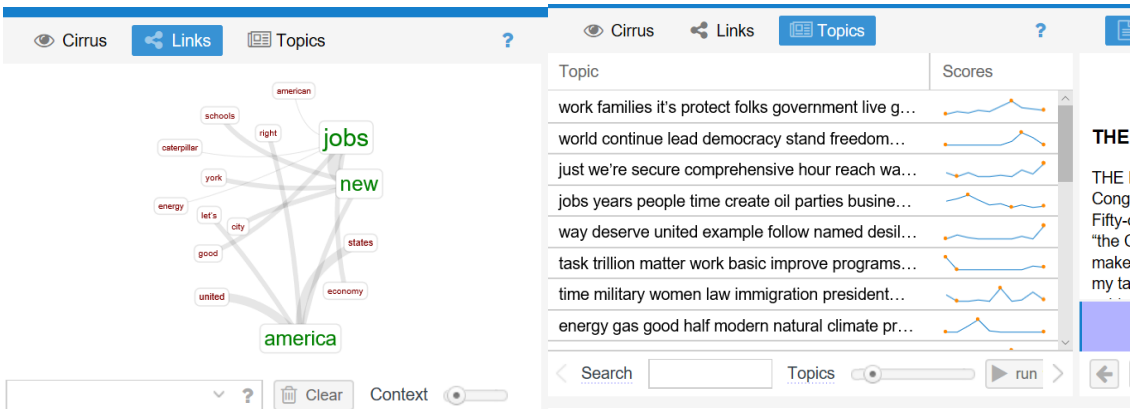
Next click on the Phrases Tab and see what the most frequent phrases are: (see below)



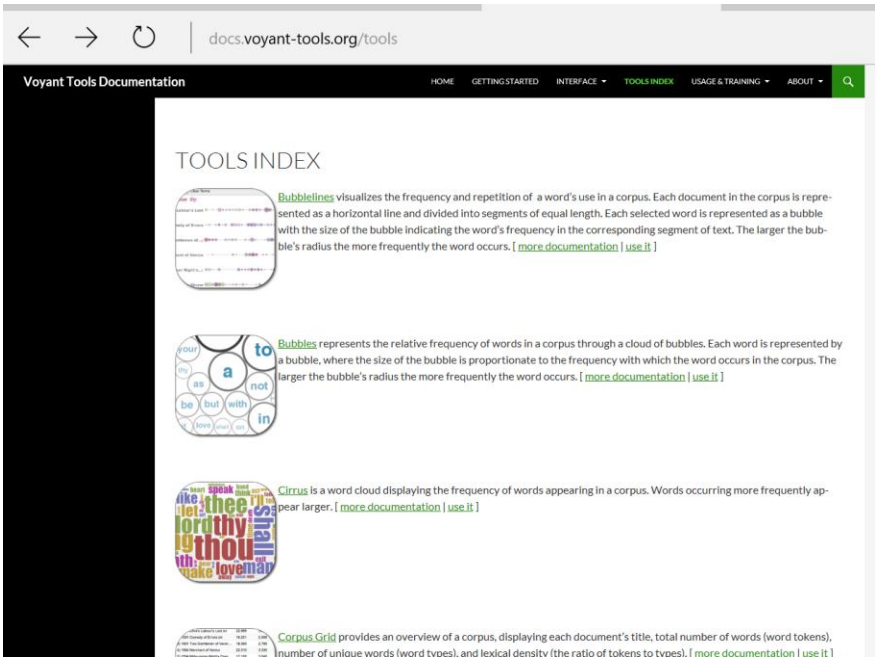
4. For your blog: make a screencapture of your results and take notes so you can save it to your new folder.

Now is a good time to **record your findings** using both screencaptures and also taking notes. I noticed, for example, that "the howling of wolves" was a phrase that showed up three times in Ch. 1 of *Dracula.* This phrase met my expectation for what I thought might happen in this novel: a creepy setting with natural elements taking on preternatural qualities.

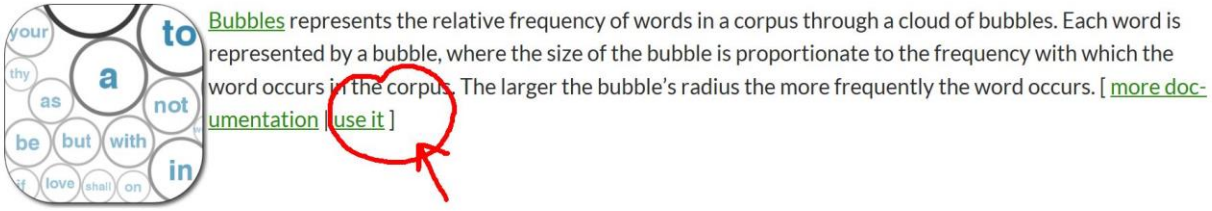
5. Now it's time to play with some tools. Take your original file(s) and make sure you have small, medium and large sections of the novel saved so you can play around.
6. You'll notice that there are multiple tools that show up if you run your cursor over the boxes. I found "links" and "topics" by scrolling over the "? " symbol at the top of the Cirrus Box. If you can't see it, here's a screencast to show you here: https://www.screencast.com/t/OzZntbS3



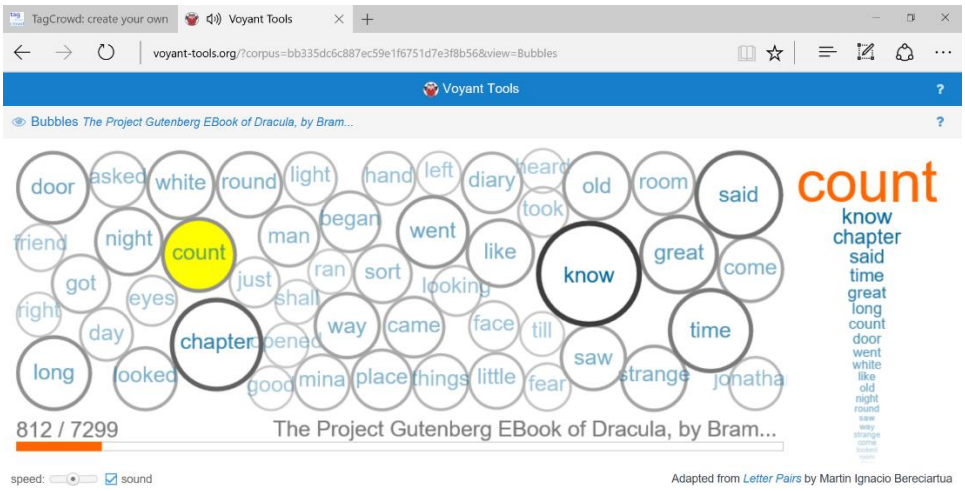
7. For more tools and explanations, go to the Tools Index here to find out how some work: http://docs.voyant-tools.org/tools/



You'll notice that there are multiple tools to try. You can first read about the tool and then click the words "use it" and put your text in the box and hit "REVEAL". I'm going to try the Bubbles tool by clicking on the words "use it" and then pasting the section of *Dracula* I want to see in the white box that pops up:



Here's the bubble



8. Try out some tools and see what you find. If you are ambitious you could compare chapters or compare different novels. For each operation that you undertake, be sure you take a screenshot of your findings and try to speculate on what your findings mean.

9. **Expect dead ends and frustrating moments!** You can't expect this to work like a Google search. What you are looking for isn't already known—you are shining a flashlight in a dark forest and so who knows what you'll find? The goal of this exercise is to respond to Franco Moretti's call for ***"maximum methodological boldness."*** That means that what you create with Voyant tools—what you uncover and discover—is subject to all the vagaries of the unknown. The learning outcome for this exercise is ***not the answer but the methodological journey.***

10. **For your blog: post your findings, screencaptures and citations and tell us about your methodological boldness and discoveries!**

Assignment Requirements Rubric for Distant Reading Project

1. **Choose and cite.**
   You choose a Victorian novel from the Fiction shelf in the Project Gutenberg archive and you save it as a .txt file. **You do not choose *Dracula.* (You can choose Dracula as a second text if you want to compare texts, but it can't be your primary text.)** *Y*ou include all the citation information on your blog. (This is found on p. 1 of the book but you'll be deleting this archive info for your text analysis.)
2. **Make predictions.**
   You write up your predictions and hypotheses for what you *think* you'll find.
3. **Provide screencaptures of the overall view.**
   You provide screen captures on your blog of the overall view (see #11 screencapture in these instructions above).
4. **You keep a record of your work and post it on your blog.**
   You record the most frequent words and most frequent phrases in your blog and include screencaptures of these.
5. **Try out at least 3 tools.**
   You try out at least 3 other tools using the Voyant tools index http://docs.voyant-tools.org/tools/ and you include your screencaptures and your reflections on what you find.
6. **Connect and compare**

You connect what you found to Moretti's call for methods of "distant reading." You compare this exercise to your previous "close reading" of novels. Write at least one substantive paragraph about this experience of "not" reading or of "distant reading."

Grading Rubric:

You do all of the above on time (by May 8 at midnight) and post the link to your blog in Moodle= **Grade of B**

You do all of the above on time and you provide exceptionally insightful, thoughtful, thorough, witty or "methodologically bold" commentary/discoveries= **Grade of A**

You do some of the above and post the link to your blog in Moodle=**Grade of C**

You do some of the above but in a haphazard and below satisfactory manner and post the link to your blog in Moodle=**Grade of D**

You do very little of the above in a haphazard and below satisfactory manner but you still post the link to your blog in Moodle=**Grade of F** (remember an F is 50% which is better than a 0)