Exploring Story Maps, GIS, Voyant, and R further

In addition to the commentary I provided on the webpage itself, I wanted to give some of my reflections on the process of creating this project. This was an expansion of my earlier Story Maps project, where I sought to use some of the text-analysis tools we worked with earlier in the semester. First, I reviewed the work that I had already completed and found a few updates that I needed to make. For instance, an embedded video had stopped working, and I had to replace it.

Once this was one, I focused on adding some basic textual analysis to my discussion of Victor Hugo’s *Le Rhin* using Voyant Tools. After experimenting for a while, I found the measuring term frequency and collocates to provide the most informative results. By applying these same methods to my look at Robert’s *Une visite à quelques champs de bataille de la vallée du Rhin,* I was able to contrast later text with *Le Rhin*. I tried using Voyant’s DreamScape tool, which seemed like a promising way to depict the geographic distribution of these travel narratives. However, a closer inspection of the results suggests that these visualizations may be problematic, with a significant number of locations seeming to be missing or misidentified. Despite this, there are some trends, and interesting connections that can be made after some of the misplaced locations are removed.

After working with Voyant, I decided to revisit R-studio to get some more sophisticated measures of emotion. However, when using R to do some basic text analysis on Hugo’s Le Rhin, I was worried about how the packages that I was using would interpret French text, so I decided to run the analysis on both the original French and an English translation of the work. As a result, I could see that the results were largely the same, suggesting that the French text had indeed been correctly processed, as well as the tone of the text remaining consistent despite translation.

A final issue I want to briefly address is the quandary of choosing between embedding visualizations vs. exporting them as static images. I chose to embed many of the visualizations that I created with Voyant, particularly when it would enable readers to see additional information, such as the number of term occurrences in a text. However, in some cases, such as with collocate diagrams, there was little benefit to making it interactive, and having a static image would probably be easier to sustain in the long run and create a greater uniformity in user experience.