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PAPER TITLE: "Bridging the Core: Digital Humanities and Pedagogical Opportunity"

ABSTRACT:

One of the most concerning controversies of the Common Core is its apparent emphasis on informational texts over traditional literary texts. Carol Jago, former head of NCTE and one of the designers of Common Core, has argued that the language of the standards does *not* call for the removal of literature. Others, like Emory English professor Mark Bauerlein, have pointed out that, regardless of the intent of the standards, literature *is* being removed from our classrooms. The debate has seemingly devolved into a binary choice—either informational *or* imaginary texts.

My paper will offer an example of just one way to merge that binary through pedagogical use of relatively new technological resources. Specifically, I will show how the *Modernist Journals Project* can be used to shed light on the original contexts of Claude McKay's poem, "If We Must Die." McKay's poem, with a seemingly uncomplicated meaning when consumed via anthology, takes on a decidedly more complex identity when viewed in its original context. The poem was published at least five times in 1919 alone, each time in a different magazine, and each time surrounded by informational texts that influenced how an audience might read the poem. By looking at this example, I hope to demonstrate not only the ways in which informational and imaginative texts can be interdependent (which is not a new discovery), but also how technological resources like the *Modernist Journals Project* can help us to introduce this kind of archival research to classrooms where it was previously unavailable.