Women and Money in Fanny Fern’s Works

Fanny Fern was a columnist and author in the 19th century. During this time she was considered very controversial because of the topics she choose to write about. These topics could be considered feminist in nature, such as her novel *Ruth Hall* in which she is a struggling widow who becomes a famous and well paid columnist (a somewhat fictional autobiography). Fanny Fern wrote three novels and countless columns which were published in six collections. Because of her controversial writings I am interested to see how the theme of money in relation to her female protagonist progresses over time or any pattern that it might show.

I am still not a hundred percent sure what I will find or what other questions might arise from my research, but I am confident that using different tools I can find a pattern in Fanny Fern’s novels and columns in relation to money and women. I think this research could prove to be interesting to literature because *Ruth Hall* and other Fanny Fern literature were very different from novels and columns being written at the time, therefore looking closer into an important aspect of the literature should yield thought-provoking results.

I will be using various methods to pursue this topic. First off I think Voyant will be very helpful especially as a starting point because it has so many different tools. This will be able to show be graphs and other visuals of money as well as collocates and word counts. From this I should be able to raise a concrete thesis that I will then be able to further research. It would also
be useful to use LDA because of the fact that I am looking into theme and not just how many times the word money appears.

Project Gutenberg has eight works from Fanny Fern, seven of which I would use in my project. One of the works there are part of her children’s book collection. Because these are not all of her works that I think should be included I will need to search further for the rest of them. I will also be using website tools like Voyant. I will also search to see if Textarc has any Fanny Fern works entered into the site because I would be very interested to see a Textarc on *Ruth Hall* or another of Fanny Fern’s works.