

WHAT IS CRITICAL IN DIGITAL HUMANITIES?

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“You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train” (Howard Zinn)

- Alan Liu argues that...“predictable catalogues of digital humanities products (tools, data, metadata, and archives), modes of institutional membership (associations, conferences, journals, and projects), and stock issues (the digital divide, privacy, and copyright) add up to little critical thinking about neoliberalism at best and collaboration with the enemy at worst.” (Losh, 177).

(BIG) DATA-FETISHISM

- from CALIFORNIAN IDEOLOGY to METADATA SOCIETY
 - Silicon Valley neo-conservative // digital hypsterism
 - Advocates of digital tools claim revolutionary impact of technology equating progress with disruptive business model.
- Lack of **interrogating** the “structures, function, habits, norms, and practices” of DIGITAL(ism).

- **Digital humanities are promoting a “neoliberal takeover” of universities (G. Hall)**
 - “From the viewpoint of the neoliberal university, the best kind of research (and the kind to be most handsomely rewarded) is the kind that brings in the most external funding”
 - **(quantities of information: deliverables)**

DH corporatist restructuring of the humanities.

- Humanities scholarship has been colonized, re-industrialized in digital age.
- Are we...
 - transforming knowledge and learning into quantities of information?
 - optimizing the social system's performance in instrumental, functional terms?
 - emphasizing openness, efficiency and transparency *away* from questions of what is just, right and true?

CRITICAL VOICES:

- promotion of project-based learning and lab-based research over reading and writing (pushed strongly by university administrators and management).
- pushing the discipline toward post-interpretative, non-suspicious, technocratic, conservative, managerial, lab-based practice.

Political history of DH/LIS

- Mark Poster's warning over so called *computational turn* in humanities
- from Humanities computing to DH
- from librarianship to I-schools
- It happened to the field of library science when so called informational turn occurred.
 - system vs. user-centered approach
 - (from librarians to computing professionals to system librarians)

LIS / DIGITAL HUMANITIES

- LESSONS FROM CRITICAL LIBRARIANSHIP:
 - “We must recognize that the days of drawing a line between library-issues and so called non-library issues are past “.
 - Samek, T. (2005). Ethical Reflection on 21st Century Information Work: an address to teachers and librarians. *Progressive Librarian*, 43-61.

CRITICAL LIBRARIANSHIP / DH

- also known as alternative, progressive, radical, and socially responsible...
 - “where considerations for the human condition and for human rights take precedence over the other professional concerns”.
- aka DH
 - where considerations over critical thinking in information organization / knowledge management (preservation, production, organization, distribution and interpretation) take precedence over digital media tools and techniques.

re/defining DH

- redefinition of technical expertise as a (superior) form of humanist knowledge!
- K. Fitzpatrick points out how applying humanistic modes of inquiry on digital media **should be obligatory in defining digital humanities!!!**

ETHICS OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES SCHOLARS?

- INFORMATION ETHICS (R. Capurro)
 - 5 pillars: vlasništvo (ownership), pristup (access), privatnost (privacy), sigurnost (security), zajednica (community).
- CRITICAL INFORMATION
- CRITICAL INFORMATION STUDIES (S. Vaidhyanathan)
 - CIS is a term coined by Siva Vaidhyanathan in 2006 to describe an emerging, transdisciplinary field concerned broadly with the politics of information in contemporary, connected societies. It first appeared in print in an essay he authored entitled, "Critical Information Studies: A Bibliographic Manifesto," which was the afterword to a 2006 special issue of the journal *Cultural Studies*.

According to Vaidhyathan, Critical Information Studies is defined by four principal concerns:

1. the abilities and liberties to use, revise, criticize, and manipulate cultural texts, images, ideas, and information;
2. the rights and abilities of users (or consumers or citizens) to alter the means and techniques through which cultural texts and information are rendered, displayed, and distributed;
3. the relationship among information control, property rights, technologies, and social norms; and
4. the cultural, political, social, and economic ramifications of global flows of culture and information.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY FOR DIGITAL HUMANITIES

- A need for hybrid practitioners!
- Social justice minded scholars!
- Awareness of computational/platform/surveillance capitalism.
 - Hacking
 - Critical encryption practices
 - Politically engaged computational praxis
 - Critical literacies / Critical Library Instruction

POST-HUMANITIES TURN

- **Transformative Networked Pedagogies**
 - inventing new ways of being theorists and philosophers
 - building collaborative spheres and connecting transformative praxes inside and outside the data-driven scholarship.
- **Pirate Philosophy, For a Digital Posthumanities (G. Hall)**
 - G. Hall explores how those in academia can move beyond finding new ways of *thinking* about the world to find instead **new ways of being** theorists and philosophers in the world.

Critical Digital Humanities

- names work that avoids errors of being overly focused on technological means to the neglect of cultural theory and sociopolitical contexts.
- emphasizes that the *technology needs to be deployed in the service of theoretically informed, socio-culturally progressive projects.*

Projekt “Javna knjižnica” (Multimedijalni institut MAMA, Zagreb)

- razvoj softvera radi jednostavnijeg dijeljenja knjiga
- otvaranje javne rasprave o praksi dijeljenja elektroničkih knjiga na internetu kao o dominantnoj društvenoj praksi o kojoj treba raspravljati, a ne prešućivati je.
- uključivanje bibliotekara-amatera koji zajedno sa profesionalcima mogu izgraditi distribuiranu korisničku mrežu (p2p) kako bi se brinuli za katalog dostupnog znanja
- primjeri tzv. fragilnih infrastruktura znanja (Library Genesis, aaaaarg.org, Monoskop, Ubu-Web itd.)



dh

- [#transformDH](#)
 - "an academic guerrilla movement seeking to (re)define capital-letter Digital Humanities as a force for transformative scholarship by collecting, sharing, and highlighting projects that push at its boundaries and work for social justice, accessibility, and inclusion."

CONCLUDING REMARK

- **privileging of technical expertise** above other forms of knowledge is **a political gesture**, and one that has proved highly effective in neutralizing critique of established power relations.

HACKING FOR THE COMMONS

HVALA!

in memory of **Aaron Swartz**
Open Education Activist, Founder & Son
November 8, 1986 – January 11, 2013

