Open DH? Mapping Blind Spots

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Harkening back to the "big tent" metaphor (e.g. Terras 2013) which characterized debates about the inclusivity of the field ten years ago, the topic of 'openness' in the conference theme invites associations of 'blue skies', endless horizons, and the sense that everything is possible – in terms of participation, dissemination and objects of observation. This notion is complicated by several issues that discourses of cultural criticism have identified in the Digital Humanities in recent years (although they are not exclusive to the field): Among them monolingualism (Fiormonte 2021), a heritage of colonialism (Risam 2019) and gender imbalance (Gao et al. 2022, 330), to name but a few.

It is as of yet unclear whether and how the aspirations of the field can be reconciled with the realities of its practices. Supposing, however, that there is something to be learned from shifting the gaze towards the "borderlands" (Earhart 2018) of the field's perceived center of activity – especially in a continental European context –, it would appear paramount to interrogate the theme of the conference and probe the boundaries of its 'openness' against this backdrop of socio-economic, political and infrastructural inequalities.

In order to remedy the *invisibility* of feminist, postcolonial and multilingual approaches or indeed their marginalization as topics with niche interest only intended for those directly affected by them, the panel will consist of six panelists that will each bring a different thematic focus to bear:

- Dr. Sarah-Mai Dang, Philipps University Marburg | **data feminism**
- Tinghui Duan, University of Trier | **multilinguality**
- Dr. Till Grallert, Humboldt University of Berlin | **decolonization**
- Jana Keck, German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) | **transnationality**
- Prof. Dr. Julianne Nyhan, Technical University of Darmstadt | **hidden history**
- Dr. Antonio Rojas Castro, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities | **cultural context**

All of these statements will have their own unique perspective but they will also intersect in many ways, which is why the panel chose a broad view on potential borders and blind spots: Sarah-Mai Dang will address film-historical desiderata while Julianne Nyhan's statement on the history of DH will also take gender aspects into account. Antonio Rojas Castro's presentation of the German-Cuban collaboration in the *Proyecto Humboldt Digital* project will argue for the necessity of decolonial and postcolonial considerations. Till Grallert's statement, which will focus on the neo-colonial invisibility of the cultural heritage of large parts of the societies of the Global South, will also provide input on the challenges for DH of under-resourced languages. This in turn connects to Tinghui Duan who will address challenges of multilinguality in the Global East. Jana Keck will cover perspectives of the Global North by presenting the transnational forum of the DH working group of the German Historical Institutes that engage, for example, in transnational discussions of data feminism which leads us back to Sarah-Mai Dang's statement.

Each panel member will give a short statement (5 minutes each, 30 minutes in total). These will be interwoven with the first round of discussion among the panelists (30 minutes). Due to the broad range of topics, the expert statements as well as this first round of discussion will address a shared set of key points to anchor and focus the conversation. After this initial hour, the discussion will be open to questions from audience members (30 minutes), making for a total length of 90 minutes.

The panel will be held in English due to it being an international panel with an international topic. This does not mean, however, that the panel will be oblivious to the cultural academic context in which it will take place. Moderation will make the conscious effort of connecting the panel discussion with discourses of the German-spea-

king DH community and situating the outcome of the panel both within and beyond the conference setting of the DHd.

It is important to note that the panel does not presume to speak for marginalized groups whom it does not represent. For this reason, it primarily aims to provide a forum for self-reflection, as a first step towards a dialogue that should be extended in the future and should, as its long-term goal, seek to amplify voices that would otherwise not be heard.

Details of the panelist statements which will initiate the discussion are as follows (in alphabetical order):

Sarah-Mai Dang, New Insights and Old Blind Spots: Visualizing Film Historical Research Data

With the increasing production and use of data in the wake of digitalization, the goal of feminist film historians to increase the visibility of women's work in film history has taken on a new urgency (Dang 2020). Through the production, processing and dissemination of data, blind spots can be maintained or amplified, but also minimized (Wreyford/Cobb 2017; D'Ignazio/Klein 2020). In her presentation, Sarah-Mai Dang will show how digital data visualization can help us to open up research on women in early cinema and thus make their impact in film history more visible. By presenting a case study on the Women Film Pioneers Explorer (https://www.online.uni-marburg.de/women-film-pioneers-explorer, Dickel et al. 2021), she seeks to discuss how visualized visions about the past can be defined as situated knowledges.

Tinghui Duan, Multilinguality as Challenge

Multilinguality in DH can refer to the inclusion of multilingual research objects in digital resources. It also refers to the need for multilingual academic exchange (which is often limited to English), especially since many terms are difficult to translate. Both aspects come with major challenges (cf. Fiormonte 2021). Tinghui Duan will address these challenges by using the example of the Romantic Period Poetry Archive (https://t.co/QdLYAaWiCZ), an "open access digital platform of global Romantic-period poetry". Since the project itself notes that its "selection process is largely Western/Northern-centric" (e.g. Görner 2021, Matuschek 2021), it is not surprising that not a single Chinese romantic writer was registered originally (https://t.co/o8MkasqQ0A). While three Chinese writers have now been admitted at the suggestion of Tinghui Duan (for romanticism in Asia cf. Long et al. 2018, Rabut 2014), he will address possibilities of acknowledging languages more equally.

Till Grallert, Neo-Colonial Layers of Invisibility in a Digitised World: Arabic Cultural Production and the Affordances of the Digital

Against the backdrop of his work on Arabic periodicals from the late nineteenth-century Eastern Mediterranean, Till Grallert will challenge the equation of "digitisation = access" by outlining the layers of inaccessibility inherent to existing digitisation efforts and infrastructures concentrated, for a large part, in the Global North (Grallert 2022, Risam 2018, 2019). These are a) a knowledge gap regarding the material artefacts themselves; b) a digitisation bias rooted in collection and survival biases and the direct costs of digitisation; c) the hegemony of socio-technical infrastructures rooted in Anglo-American neoliberal capitalism and the Western cultural canon (cf. Piron 2018); d) insufficient computational tools for layout and optical character recognition (cf. Wrisley et al. forthcoming); and e) insufficient access to basic digital infrastructures and utilities (cf. Aiyegbusi 2019).

Jana Keck, The Working Group Digital Humanities of the Max Weber Foundation and its Role as a Transnational Forum for German DH Scholars

The Working Group Digital Humanities of the Max Weber Foundation brings together German DH scholars from 11 institutes worldwide with diverse backgrounds in the humanities (cf. Keck/Rohden 2021). The group provides not only a platform to discuss DH methods, theories and projects, but it also allows for the reflection on how the respective cultural, political, social, or economic conditions of the different locations shape the everyday experiences of DH research. Discussions in the group about upcoming trends and topics in DH have revealed a unanimous view: We need more ethics in DH! Jana Keck's statement will elaborate on the group's findings that it is not so much the debate about technological innovations or newest tools that brings DH-scholars together worldwide, but rather discussions on ethical frameworks in DH (Proferes 2020).

Julianne Nyhan, On Hidden and Devalued Labour in the Incunabular Digital Humanities:

The Index Thomisticus Project c. 1954–67

Julianne Nyhan will seek to 'represence' the role of gender and invisible labour in the incunabular DH. Between 1954–1967, the Index Thomisticus project, an influential project in the early years of the field of Humanities Computing, had a workforce that numbered, at its peak, about 65 individuals. Yet many of those who worked in this project, especially the young women handling the project data, remain absent from histories of the development of DH. As her forthcoming book (Nyhan 2023) explores, these labour absences were neither inconsequential nor thoughtless, but can be understood to distill processes of exclusion/inclusion and expressions of social and epistemological hierarchy that would shape not only the emerging field of humanities computing, and in due course DH, but aspects of the wider development of computing too.

Antonio Rojas Castro, Diversifying the User Experience in Digital Editions

User experience research and design is very common in libraries, archives, and universities to assess the ease with which the community uses informational resources (Azadbakht, Blair, and Jones 2017; Seale, Hicks, and Nicholson 2022). In the field of DH, researchers have recognized the important role of the graphical user interface in digital editions (Bleier et al. 2018) and how software and tools are shaping the presentation of texts (Alvite-Díez and Rojas Castro 2022). This statement aims to take a critical approach to user experience and to interrogate how we can diversify the targeted users of Proyecto Humboldt Digital (https://habanaberlin.hypotheses.org/) to broaden the access and usage of our digital editions.

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