Poster proposal

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Explorer, trader, conqueror? On the role of the digital editor.

Willard McCarty has employed metaphors and stories to "suggest the beginnings of what might be called a new professional myth"[1] for the Digital Humanities. Such a "myth" can evoke a clearer sense of self which in turn is instrumental in establishing curricula and institutionalizing Digital Humanities. McCarty envisions different landscapes to locate interdisciplinarity. Our poster will expand on his imagery of an archipelago: islands as disciplines and the quest for knowledge as a journey through uncharted waters. The focus will be narrowed down to the field of digital editing and the role of the digital editor in particular.

In our understanding, a digital editor is someone who plays an active and essential part in the conceptualization and implementation of digital editions, not only familiar with the material but also aware of the technical matters involved. More than that, he is able to combine his competences to fully exploit the potentials of the digital to create an edition centered around the specific needs of the individual materials while accommodating diverse research interests as best as possible.

When Peter Robinson asked Digital Humanists to get out of textual scholarship[2] it was a proclamation to the traditional disciplines to defend their territory by absorbing the digital turn completely, becoming aware of its implications for what they do, how they do it, and who they are.[3] However, required competences still have not found their way into teaching and

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[1] Willard McCarty, *Tree, Turf, Centre, Archipelago - or Wild Acre? Metaphors and Stories for Humanities Computing*, in: Literary and Linguistic Computing 21/1 (2006), p. 1-13, here p. 2. First published online November 25, 2005 <doi:10.1093/llc/fqi066>.

[2] Peter Robinson, *Why digital humanists should get out of textual scholarship.* Paper given at the Social, Digital, Scholarly Editing conference in Nebraska (2013). <https://www.academia.edu/4124828/SDSE_2013_why_digital_humanists_should_get_out_of_textual_scholarship>.

[3] Peter Robinson: *Digital humanists should get out of textual scholarship: and if they will not, textual scholars should throw them out.* Blogpost on Digital Scholarly Editions (2013). <http://scholarlydigitaleditions.blogspot.co.at/2013/07/why-digital-humanists-should-get-out-of.html>.

learning at universities, leaving the scholar to attend extracurricular workshops or gain skills autodidactically. Even if the digital editor succeeds in conquering competences from both scholarly editing and Digital Humanities, the traditional disciplines will presumably perceive this as a loss of expertise rather than recognize cross-disciplinarity as an expertise in itself. Thus, the digital editor risks losing the academic accolades he may have received, had he continued a more "traditional" path of scholarship in his home discipline. His best prospect is to obtain the role of a "craftsman" who facilitates the trade between scholars and IT.

The image we are painting of the digital editor and his role within established disciplines might seem pessimistic but is intended to inspire a conversation about the status quo. By pushing McCarty's "sea-going"[4] metaphor further, visualizing the archipelago of the humanities and the navigating digital editor in it, we wish to raise the following questions:

Where are we – within other disciplines, outside or in between?

Where are we invited to cast our anchor?

And who are we – explorers, traders, or conquerors?

Selective Bibliography

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[4] McCarty 2006, p. 6.