Digital Humanities Case Study

Andrew Philip

What is the subject of your research?

My research explores the entangled intersections of filmmaking technology, aesthetics and the material implications therein. As a practitioner, I employ digital filmmaking practice-as-research to explore complex epistemological and ontological questions.

How and why did you get involved with Digital Humanities?

I've been a video editor and digital animator outside of academia for the past twenty-odd years. Although I edited celluloid film as an undergraduate film student, I also learned how to use the digital editing systems that were already becoming the industry standard at the time. In other words, for my entire career in the visual arts, philosophy, culture and aesthetics have always been inseparable from the digital. My scholarly interest in digital technology began during my master's degree at Goldsmiths, inspired by modules on Media Archaeology, Software Studies and Media Psychology. During my research, I encountered the work of particle physicist and queer theorist Karen Barad whose philosophy profoundly influenced my understanding of the epistemological and ontological implications of digital technology. My recently submitted practice-as-research doctoral thesis engages with Barad through a very personal film about matrilineal inheritances.

How have you used Digital Humanities methods or principles in your research?

My filmmaking practice makes use of computational techniques and contrasting visualisations of digital images to challenge – or queer – traditional conceptions of the objectivity of the film image. By examining the historical development of these cultural-computational practices within gendered, racialised and situated epistemological assumptions, I attempt to generate some bridges between digital technology, cultural analysis, film and queer theory.

What were the benefits of doing so? Were there any challenges?

The challenge, as with any humanities research, is that my work tends to raise more questions than provide definitive answers. However, I view this as a benefit, as definitive answers inevitably exclude most of the universe's complexities. Our pursuit of rational explanations for every detail in the world limits its potential, usually at the expense of those deemed less human or non-human.

What would you advise others to think about when engaging with DH?

Living in an ever-more digital environment means we only have to be curious about our daily practices to engage with the kind of thinking encouraged by Digital Humanities approaches. What do digital practices reveal about how we understand and identify ourselves? These were the kinds of questions that spurred on my research.

Where can we learn more about your research?

As an early career researcher who has been struggling to finish a thesis over the past four years, I don't have much to share in terms of publications – but watch this space! I keep my **ResearchGate** profile up to date, so that's probably the best place to have a look.

Find out more

- **Andrew Philip** (staff profile)
- **Andrew Philip** (ResearchGate profile)