Postdigital Commons

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I am a white able-bodied male of middle-class origin, living in a European country and employed as a university professor – an academic definition of privilege. And yet, for a good part of my life, my privilege had not felt that privileged at all.

During my formative years, whiteness in Croatia was not a big issue, as everyone around me was white. It took me a lot of travel, and my county joining the European Union, to even begin grasping the social impact of race. In 1990s Croatia, being an able-bodied male also did not feel like a particular privilege – as those nice young able male bodies were widely conscripted and sent to war. Back in the day, actually, being disabled or female carried a big privilege of not dying in the battlefield.

The war in Croatia ended when I was 18 years old, and since then, the pros and cons of my white able-bodied middle-class male positionality have definitely switched into my favour. Yet the fact that someone's identity can be both a privilege and a disadvantage has stuck with me powerfully. As Sarah Hayes (2023) argues, postdigital positionality is beyond any attempts at generalization.

Fast forward to my paper, the conclusion that '[t]oday's postdigital commons now need to include human and non-human actors, data and algorithms, biology, information, and society' opens a Pandora's box of context. Postdigital commons can privilege or de-privilege human (or non-human) actors, they can give too much (or too little) agency to technology or biology, and so on. Varied and changing contexts do not allow for exclusively right or wrong answers, but their understanding does depend on asking the right questions. This is why adding positionality statements to each and every article in *Ouverte Et Libre - Open Education* is such an important editorial decision.

In this statement, I can offer only a small part of the positionality puzzle. This article's reading depends on my positionality, journal's positionality, reader's positionality, and then the positionality of the many actors, human and non-human, that appear in the article. It will further depend on the time of reading, the place of reading, and the social, political, and other circumstances around the reading. While I cannot predict any of those elements, I can offer my own two cents. Text in front of your eyes, dear reader, is only the very beginning. I look forward to hearing what you will make of it!

Reference

Hayes, S. (2023). Positionality in Postdigital Research: The Power to Effect Change. In P. Jandrić, A. MacKenzie, & J. Knox (Eds.), *Constructing Postdigital Research. Method and Emancipation* (pp. 3–21). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35411-3_1.