

Introduction

Marco Sartor
Università di Parma, Italia

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1 Intersections

The essays that constitute this volume outline a in some ways comprehensive overview of a selected range of experiences that have arisen in the field of Public Humanities, albeit inevitably limited to a few privileged research strands and conducted by focusing more on specific case studies than on their underlying theoretical and methodological frameworks.¹ At the basis of such approach there is primarily what is both a judgment of value and a petition of principle about the role and function to assign to Public Humanities in the social context of our time: that it, in short, performs a task tenaciously clinging to the practical sphere, as also recognised by several recent contributions (Smulyan 2021) and made clear by associations with contiguous categories such as applied humanities (Steinberg 1974; Nikitina 2009) and public engagement (Ross 2012; Cooper 2014).²

Thus, the attempt to sketch a compelling overview of the socio-cultural instances that, since the middle of the last century, have contributed to the launching of projects and grants in the field of Public

¹ The Author would like to thank Francesca Masiero (University College London) and Mariateresa Sala for the translation check.

² Particularly revealing in this regard are Jacobson's concluding thoughts on the volume *Doing Public Humanities*, which emphasizes that "Public Humanities is in the *doing*" (italics in the original text) and, a little further on, states that "Public Humanities, properly conducted, is a verb, not a noun" (Jacobson 2021, 165).

Humanities and, similarly, the intention to provide a complete historical synthesis of the main phases and moments that have fostered their development (for which see Schroeder 2017; 2021) do not align with such a perspective. This volume, instead, deliberately unfolds in snapshots, by presenting projects, experiences and case studies related to the historical, artistic, archaeological and literary areas, in the conviction that each of those images has its own value without the need for other explanations. Their succession is then in charge of restoring the overall sense and identifying the various threads that make up the warp of the publication.

In this sense, therefore, is to be understood the concept of ‘insight’ present in the subtitle of the volume and here aimed to account for the heterogeneity and autonomy of the individual contributions, which, however, do not disdain to be collected (or to reveal themselves) *a posteriori* within a project endowed with its multiplicity and coherence. In particular, the overall design of such a project is to be found in the concept of ‘intersection’ as the unifying element – even before being its interpretative key – of the essays gathered here. It is not by chance that the study day whose proceedings are published in this volume bears the title *Intersections. New Perspectives for Public Humanities*, to underline how in the varied thematic excursion of the contributions the pivotal and, in some ways, ordering function resided in the encounter with a different reality from the original one, hence the concept of intersection.³

Notwithstanding the variety of interpretations that have arisen and to which this term applies, it seems particularly perspicuous and purposeful – at least in the mind of the Author – the echo of a successful book by the Swedish-American writer Frans Johansson, where ‘intersection’ is defined as:

a place where different cultures, domains, and disciplines stream together toward a single point. They connect, allowing for established concepts to clash and combine, ultimately forming a multitude of new, groundbreaking ideas. (Johansson 2006, 2)

More specifically, the term occurs primarily in the combination of concepts from different ‘fields’, namely “disciplines, cultures, and do-

³ The initiative, which took place online on December 3, 2020, was organised with funds from Ca’ Foscari University of Venice by the international network Humanities for Change (<https://humanitiesforchange.org>), in collaboration with the Venice Centre for Digital and Public Humanities (VeDPH) and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Banja Luka. The book of abstracts of the conference is available on the event page: <https://bembus.org/intersections>; the recordings of the talks are available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL30jJCPOSmlqQZtdwC6m6vgEvOQdxz0q0>.

mains” in which one can specialise “through education, work, hobbies, traditions, or other life experiences” (Johansson 2006, 16), with the aim of fostering the development of ‘intersectional ideas’ characterised by innovation and creativity. It goes without saying that the intersection is not realised *ea ipsa* in the mere juxtaposition of concepts from different fields, but is rather qualified as a ‘place’ able to significantly increase the development of unusual connections that can organise one or more domains of knowledge in new and particularly effective ways.

The set of findings collected so far lends itself to manifold interpretative consequences, which are at the centre of the itinerary unfolded in these pages and which appear to be fundamentally connected to three main nuclei, corresponding to as many constitutive elements of the concept of intersection. First of all, it should be noted that, in order to take place, an intersection requires a space (real or virtual) that can encourage the interaction of different fields of knowledge. This also explains the reference to the Medici court in the title of Johansson’s book, where it is considered the “epicentre of a creative explosion” (2006, 3) and a result of a successful confluence between the 15th and 16th centuries of some of the most prominent cultural figures of the time. In the first decades of the new millennium, the venues capable of recreating the ‘Medici effect’ by supporting the development of innovative and creative ideas are represented, in the university scenario, by inter-departmental research centres and international networks of public and private institutions. In other words, institutions that – individually or as part of larger networks – promote the international mobility of scholars and welcome hybrid profiles, including those from outside academia and from the entrepreneurial field, in order to work collaboratively as a team to increase knowledge production and the development of innovative ideas. This interweaving of motivations and principles is at the base of some leading international realities: from the MetaLab(at)Harvard⁴ to the MIT Media Lab,⁵ from the Venice Cen-

⁴ Founded in 2011 and directed by Jeffrey Schnapp, who also previously served as director and founder of the Stanford Humanities Lab (1999-2009), the MetaLab(at)Harvard (<https://metalabharvard.github.io>) is “an idea foundry, a knowledge-design lab, and a production studio experimenting in the networked arts and humanities”. On the history and projects of the centre, see the recording of the event *The Lab of Ideas: a Conversation with Jeffrey Schnapp* organised on December 16, 2020 by VeDPH in collaboration with Humanities for Change: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SU6GUvo0dQg>.

⁵ The MIT Media Lab (<https://www.media.mit.edu>) was founded in 1985 by Nicholas Negroponte and Jerome Wiesner. It brings together designers, engineers, artists, and scientists who are involved in the development of interdisciplinary research projects on communities and environments (social robotics, tools for learning, models for sustainable cities) that encompass art, science, design, and technology.

tre for Digital and Public Humanities (VeDPH)⁶ to the London Interdisciplinary School (LIS).⁷

From these considerations stems the second core of concern, already peculiar to the aforementioned realities, namely the use of an interdisciplinary approach in all phases of the development of the intersectional idea, from the composition of the team to the design of the research project. Underlying this is the belief that different knowledge communities can “integrate the insights from multiple disciplines to generate a superior understanding of a particular question” (Szostak, Gnoli, López-Huertas 2016, 1),⁸ that is to create the conditions to considerably increase the likelihood that an “explosion of remarkable innovations” will occur (Johansson 2006, 15). In this regard, references to the ‘explosion’, which pervade Johansson’s essay on various occasions, are of undoubted symptomatic value and constitute, for the purposes of our discussion, the third and last focus of interest. It is evident that in the Medici effect, intersectional ideas constitute a chaotic universe within which they intertwine, merge and, not lastly, clash. That is why the production of knowledge takes place primarily in their ‘collision’, to use a term particularly dear to Michael John Gorman (2020). Although with some substantial differences, the Medici effect shares multiple points of tangency with the ‘edge effect’ that occurs in ecology when, in a transition zone between two ecosystems, ecological communities influence each other and generate a considerable increase in biodiversity, both in terms of number and variety of life forms (Levin 2009, 780). According to Gorman (2020), the methodological principles underlying the ‘edge effect’ can be applied to the creation of new types of cultural environments that, by nurturing the contamination and collision of ideas from different fields of knowledge (science, art, design, technology), foster the development of new critical conversations and creative approaches to humanistic knowledge.⁹ Hence the establishment of

6 The VeDPH (<https://unive.it/vedph>), founded in June 2019 and directed by Franz Fischer, is part of the Department of Humanities (DSU) at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. On the activities of the centre, cf. § 3 of Stefano Dall’Aglio’s essay in this volume.

7 The London Interdisciplinary School (<https://www.londoninterdisciplinary-school.org>), which was founded by a group of entrepreneurs and educators in 2017 and is directed by Carl Gombich, proposes to deliver from the a.y. 2021-22 a Bachelor of Arts (BASc) course in Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods. The course of study offers a cross-disciplinary approach, providing students with knowledge and methods from the arts, sciences, and the humanities.

8 Although primarily focused on STEM disciplines, see the first chapter of this volume devoted to the role of interdisciplinarity in research and teaching, also with reference to the design of research projects (Szostak et al. 2016, 1-33).

9 It is remarkable that the first volume of *magazén* was dedicated to a topic related to those discussed here, namely the concept of ‘fusion’, which “serves well to embrace every possible kind of merger, interrelation, joint, blend, interpenetration, interdepen-

fertile 'border spaces' that, in conjunction with traditional cultural institutions, contribute to the creation of new forms of experience.

In this framework are to be ascribed the studies contained in the volume, which display, in a more or less explicit way, their relationship with the instances and methodological principles on which we have been discussing up to now. Despite the unavoidable practical impetus that - as we have seen - stands as a constitutive character of Public Humanities, the essays do not miss to tackle some theoretical perspectives aimed at outlining the current state of the art and at identifying the main future challenges with reference both to the international context and to the Italian university system, as is the case with Stefano Dall'Aglio's paper. The article by Iris Pupella-Noguès, taking up the theoretical instances on Public History effectively illustrated by Stefano Dall'Aglio, presents some projects dealing with the fascist-era monuments of the cities of Bolzano and Trieste. The contributions by Francesca Vera Romano on Matera and Carlo Corsato and Kate Devine on the National Gallery have the merit of describing some experiences that involve active engagement of people with motor, visual or hearing disabilities, as well as the promotion of inclusive practices for the fruition and valorisation of cultural heritage. Antonietta Biondi's essay is also to be traced back to this perspective. Like the previous one by Carlo Corsato and Kate Devine, it has its fulcrum in museum experiences and in the changes brought about by the spread of pandemics. These interventions, essentially dedicated to history and art history, share with the following ones by Elisa Corrà on archaeology and by Alessandra Trevisan and Alice Giroto on literature the use of innovative methods for knowledge transmission. Specifically, the former presents several projects of public archaeology that are characterised by a strong innovative character, from the citizen science approach to the use of open data and neural interfaces; the latter aims to 'deform' the literary canon - notoriously exclusive heritage of academic circles - to give voice to forgotten artists through alternative communication channels, such as podcasts, videos, visual artworks, and open mic. Despite the thematic heterogeneity, these studies not only confront themselves with the experience of Public Humanities but also experiment, as far as possible, the use of innovative ways of conveying and producing knowledge, fostering the development of intersectional ideas between different domains. It is enough to consider, just as an example, how the valorisation of the Matera area - recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site - does not only involve a generic use of digital technologies for the development of sustainable tourism, but the adop-

gency, cross-contamination that affected or still informs the processes, approaches, and practices of research in this wider field" (Fischer, Mantoan, Tramelli 2020a, 11).

tion of experimental practices – from smart agriculture made possible thanks to the 5G network to blockchain technologies – that lead to the collision of ideas and the intersection of different profiles: scientists, computer scientists, and engineers, but also historians, art historians, and archaeologists.

2 Public Humanities

The discussion thus rebounds towards another pole that outlines the field of application of these studies and, in particular, the concept of Public Humanities. In the following pages, the considerations on the potentialities offered by the effects of intersections – as already mentioned – are not applied to the hyper-specialised domains of knowledge, but to specific cases of study whose main object is to be found in the outflow of knowledge from the university venues and the academic research centres. In short, the underlying assumption is that the *studia humanitatis* may provide a greater awareness of the complexity of the political, social and economic issues of our time and serve as an instrument of practical action, which is an essential prerequisite for a democratic society (Nussbaum 2010). This inevitably calls for a more accurate definition aimed at describing the scope of intervention of the Public Humanities and at identifying its main features. It is indeed a very challenging task, which cannot avoid considering the fact that up to now there is still no generally accepted definition which can clarify the nature of Public Humanities and, at the same time, differentiate it from more or less similar categories, such as civic and community engagement, applied humanities, service learning or public scholarship.¹⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising that even one of the most remarkable theoretical contributions on Public Humanities (Schroeder 2021) aims to trace a history *eo nomine* of the expression rather than of the movement itself. However, given the inevitable need for an attentive demarcation of the field of intervention, one can agree with Schroeder in asserting that:

Public Humanities is the work of moving humanistic knowledge among individuals and groups of people. Some of the most common varieties of work are translational scholarship; cultural organizing; production of programs, plays, performances, tours, festivals, exhibits, or other audience-oriented humanistic activities. Others in-

10 It should be noted, incidentally, that the history of Digital Humanities is also accompanied by some difficulties in establishing a universally agreed definition, although in this case the theoretical discussion is considerably more consistent, as proved by the website <https://whatisdigitalhumanities.com> where 817 definitions provided by the participants of the 2009-14 editions of the *Day of DH* are collected.

clude maker activities, particularly making art, music, writing, typically with an orientation toward an evidentiary basis and/or some form of expertise; and generally all ways of making meaning socially, or making personal meaning in public space. (Schroeder 2021, 6)

In the meaning that most closely resembles the current one, the expression Public Humanities became widespread as a result of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965,¹¹ with the start, since the 1970s, of Public Humanities programmes and grants funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), albeit at least until the beginning of the following decade the concept continued to cover a purely nominal character.

If the term Public Humanities is still shrouded in a partly nebulous physiognomy,¹² the role of the public humanist appears more clearly defined thanks to some contributions that describe the most frequent activities and principles that inspire these professionals (Elison 2013; Zinn 2008). Similarly, the scope of intervention of some of the disciplines that converge under the more general category of humanities is also quite well defined. Particularly emblematic in this regard is the case of Public History, which has been endowed since 2012 with an international federation (namely the International Federation for Public History) and has under its belt, in addition to the establishment of several university courses, the organisation of annual conferences and the editing of a scientific journal.¹³ This is discussed in more detail by Cauvin (2018; 2021) and, among the authors of this volume, also with specific reference to the Italian context, by Stefano Dall'Aglio and Iris Pupella-Noguès. Nor does there seem to be a lack of adequate feedback for public art (Cartiere 2008) and public archaeology (Moshenska 2017), while the issues that involve the philological-literary field, at least in the Italian context, are still at an early stage. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that a few seminal remarks appear in some major works on digital philology and digital

11 The Act can be read in the legislative section of the NEH website at: <https://www.neh.gov/about/history/national-foundation-arts-and-humanities-act-1965-pl-89-209>.

12 The definition provided in the white paper of the North Eastern Public Humanities Consortium (NEPH) is only partially acceptable in this work as it is strongly anchored to US contexts and thus full of political references which are extraneous to the context of the essays that constitute this volume: "Public Humanities strives to locate, cultivate, and build upon commonalities through broadly collaborative practices of story-telling; of historical inquiry, recovery, and acknowledgements; and of artistic expression, aimed at rededicating the American university as a true community resource" (Jacobson 2021, 168-9). Finally, although not providing a definition, Lubar's contribution is particularly clarifying (2014).

13 It is the semi-annual journal *International Public History*, founded in 2018 and published for De Gruyter.

textual scholarship (see Mastandrea 2017 and Zaccarello 2019), attracting the attention of the most eminent scholars at international level.¹⁴ As early as 2017, Marco Santagata warned that:

Dissemination is a task that literary studies cannot shirk, if it is true that helping the reader to understand and keep alive in the present literary and cultural traditions of the past is perhaps the primary purpose of philological work. However, it does not seem, at least in Italy, to be at the forefront of the thoughts of scholars, especially those dealing with the oldest texts. (Santagata 2017, 6)

However, the most comprehensive investigation of this issue is undoubtedly due to Paola Italia who, in a recent monograph (2020), proposes to combine the digital and public instances of philology and literature starting from a study of the changes of the status of the texts caused by the digital revolution. In particular, her acknowledgement is accompanied by a strong exhortation to consider literary texts as goods belonging to the cultural heritage of a society.

In a cultural system that considers texts as common goods, a founding part of our cultural heritage, protecting them, taking care of them [...], guaranteeing their quality and promoting their diffusion, become real social tasks, even more than a cultural ones, a duty that every scholar should set himself. (Italia 2020, 13)

Hence the invitation, addressed primarily to scholars, to pay renewed attention to the textual tradition and to the *facies* of online texts. At the base of such demand there is the acknowledgement, indeed quite paradoxical, that the common reader, defined 'Google reader', finds on the Internet texts that are generally incorrect or approximate, arbitrarily modernised or that never existed - in other words 'junk food' -, while up-to-date and accurate editions by the most authoritative scholars - Proust's *madeleines* - are printed in a few dozen copies and remain confined in libraries that are barely accessible to most people.¹⁵ For this reason, the wish invoked by Italia for a deeper attention from scholars towards collaborative platforms such

14 It should be stressed, however, that the international framework is more complex and articulated and includes several experiences of crowdsourcing editions, such as the Bentham Project (<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/transcribe-bentham/>) developed within University College of London, social editions (Siemens et al. 2014) and community-driven editions (Brumfield 2017).

15 These thoughts are not without important implications on research funding if we consider that most of the investments are allocated to the preparation of editions that will have a limited circulation, whereas the 'Google-reader' will continue to rely on outdated editions, often randomly chosen on the basis of their availability on the web.

as Wikisource to encourage the circulation of correct, updated and trustworthy editions of the texts that constitute our cultural heritage is highly shareable.¹⁶

Although the observations raised in these pages bear witness to the praiseworthy effort to bend the discussion on Public Humanities to a more or less philological-literary level, they reveal the sometimes invasive involvement of the digital component, which is extraneous to certain declinations of Public Humanities, such as festivals and exhibitions (Schroeder 2021). Nevertheless, the effort made by several parties to define the scope of intervention of the Public Humanities and confer a certain autonomy and academic dignity to the status of these expressions is commendable. In this sense, the foundation in 2002 of an excellence centre such as the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University¹⁷ has been an important catalyst for this strand of studies that has determined – among other things – the setting up of the first Master of Art programme in Public Humanities in the United States. Therefore, it is not surprising that scholars who gravitate (or have gravitated) around this institution are behind the publication of the volume *Doing Public Humanities*, edited by Susan Smulyan (2021), which qualifies as the most up-to-date and complete recognition of Public Humanities with contributions from the leading scholars at international level. At the same time, significant and seminal contributions are expected to come from the *Palgrave Handbook of Digital and Public Humanities*, edited by Anne Schwan and Tara Thomson of Edinburgh Napier University and now forthcoming from Palgrave. Equally high expectations are placed on the issues of the journal *magazén*,¹⁸ which has already stressed the importance of the public component on several occasions (Fischer, Mantoan, Tramelli 2020a; 2020b) and has provided pivotal contributions on this topic, including Heinisch's (2020) fundamental considerations on citizen humanities.¹⁹

16 These issues were the main focus of Paola Italia's talk at the study day. You can watch the recording of her presentation on the YouTube playlist of the event: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL30jJCP0smlqQZtdwC6m6vgEv0Qdxz0q0>.

17 For more information on the activities of the centre, please visit the website: <https://www.brown.edu/academics/public-humanities/home>.

18 Cf. the journal's page on the publisher's website: <https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni4/riviste/magazen/info>.

19 More generally, for an overview (constantly updated) on the state of Public Humanities (research centres, publications, training opportunities and projects), see the page edited by the author with the support of Irene Mamprin: <https://bembus.org/public-humanities>.

3 Knowledgescape

By referring to Schroeder (2017; 2021) for an examination of the political and social influences (extraneous to the contributions included in this volume) that have characterised the evolution of the Public Humanities in the past decades, a last path which is likely to offer good results in the definition of Public Humanities trends is linked to the recognition of some thematic constants and recurrent nodes that preside over the essays collected in this volume. In this sense, a first nucleus of considerations could involve the function of the academic institutions and, in particular, the apparent paradox determined by their involvement in instances that programmatically propose to convey humanistic knowledge in environments external to university campuses. However, there is no inconsistency in such an attitude since it is one of the tasks of universities to deal not only with academic research *stricto sensu*, but also with large-scale dissemination of results, even if in many national realities - including Italy - this second activity still occupies a less important role than the first. It goes without saying that nowadays the conviction that Public Humanities “meant the reception of humanities by anyone but academics” (Schroeder 2021, 9) is seen completely outdated and as part of an atavistic heritage that culminated with the publication of *On the Uses of the Humanities: Vision and Application* (1984) by a group of researchers from the Hastings Center in New York. Conversely, today the oppositional nature of the dyad ‘public’ and ‘academic’ appears to have been replaced by the image of a close continuity and profitable interaction between the two poles, as it can be seen from the case studies presented in this volume and in Smulyan (2021). This leads to the conclusion that Public Humanities takes place on and off university campuses and involves the participation of scholars and students as well as local communities and citizens.

Given these premises, it is not difficult, along these lines, to take a further step to identify the most important outcomes in the direction we are interested in. As Smulyan states (but see also Burton, Fisher 2021), Public Humanities ultimately defines itself as

a way to create new knowledge, just as does the best of more traditional scholarship. (Smulyan 2021, 2)

The decision to entitle the volume *Knowledgescape* should be interpreted in this light, in order to underline the osmotic exchange (rather than the unidirectional outflow) of knowledge between the academic field and the social context. In this regard, the suffix *-scape* is to be understood as an explicit allusion to the model of global cultural flow developed by Appadurai (1990; 1996). The American anthropologist, starting from the assumption that the current complexity of

the global economy is due to the presence of some fundamental disjunctures in the triad economy-culture-politics, proposes

that an elementary framework for exploring such disjunctures is to look at the relationship between five dimensions of global cultural flow which can be termed: (a) ethnoscapescapes; (b) mediascapescapes; (c) technoscapescapes; (d) finanscapescapes; and (e) ideoscapescapes. (Appadurai 1990, 296)

In the formulation theorised by Appadurai, the choice of the suffix -scape was suggested by two main reasons, which also lend themselves to describing the reality deployed in this volume. Firstly, it has the merit of representing effectively the fluid and irregular form of the landscapes presented by Appadurai, which is basically common to that of the Public Humanities. These consonances are further reinforced by the fact that the relationships between the landscapes, like those that have marked the history of Public Humanities in the past decades, are qualified as a kind of

deeply perspectival constructs, inflected very much by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors. (296)

In this sense, 'knowledscape' refers not only to the flow of knowledge that is conveyed from academic and cultural institutions at large to communities (and vice versa), but also to the underlying complexity of such exchanges, which are characterised by their heterogeneous and chaotic nature, and influenced by manifold cultural, social and political factors (Rantanen 2006, 12; Jacobson 2021, 167).

Re-examined in this way, the discourse on the Public Humanities turns into an attempt to re-establish bridges between the domains of specialised knowledge and the audiences, by developing a variety of channels, models and formats that allow forms of knowledge to 'matter' in society. In this way, the humanities appear reinvigorated by public-facing practices and the crisis that surrounds them is transformed into an opportunity for renewal "to extend or re-map fields of enquiry and knowledge" and "to reposition them with respect to contemporary society" (Schnapp 2014, 6). This is, in essence, the starting point of Jeffrey Schnapp's keynote lecture (Schnapp, unpublished) dedicated to the ways of transferring knowledge in contexts that have an impact outside the academic sphere, that is, how to make knowledge 'actionable'. In his paper, Schnapp stresses that the problem of transferring expertise to a non-expert audience is not so much a question of disseminating knowledge but rather of "reimagin[ing], reinvent[ing] and redesign[ing] knowledge forms" (Schnapp, unpublished). In other words, it is a matter of knowledge design, as this implies rethinking not only contents, but also meth-

ods, forms and genres that produce humanistic knowledge (Schnapp 2014, 5). In short, it is critical design practice that makes it possible to break down the obstacles that make specific domains of knowledge inaccessible or invisible to the general audience. Hence the need to rethink training moments inside and outside the university in the direction of paths that are able to unite and reconcile practical and theoretical instances.

In conclusion, the itinerary unfolded in the following essays shows once again, if ever there was a need, that raw data are not enough: in order to acquire value, they must be edited, shaped and critically interpreted (Burdick et al. 2014, 71-7, 81-4). This is precisely one of the tasks of humanists which cannot be demanded by the machines but only explored with their help. Hence the usefulness of thinking about a new commitment in terms of representation and visualisation of data with the aim of presenting them to a broad, general audience, coinciding with communities in the broad sense (Schnapp 2014, 12-13). This task should not be separated from an experimental approach which, by fostering the creation of cross-media and multimedial contents, translates data into innovative forms (storytelling, spatialisation) that allow to identify new relations intelligible to a wide audience. This could take place especially in hybrid environments, laboratories inside or outside academic institutions (such as the Civic Design Data Lab at MIT) which, by qualifying themselves as spaces devoted both to research and to public persuasion and communication, foster critical and creative thinking by affecting the social fabric. After all, this is also (or above all) what is sought from humanities for change.

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