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Call for Articles

Ikhtilaf, The Journal of Critical Humanities and Social Studies invites scholarly articles, book reviews, and review essays for its second issue on:

“ The Covid Pandemic and the digital turn in Higher Education”

“Covid-19” may sound like a sci-fi or an AI horror movie title, but it is actually closer to reality than to fantasy. For one thing, it does reflect the surrealist atmosphere that seems to have wrapped the world during the past year and a half.

Already on a fast track to everything digital, the world today is on a bullet train to becoming totally virtual. This sharp turn, is more than just the beginning of that which many were until very recently reluctant to join, rather it seems like an end, at least of something already remotely familiar. Causing an extreme shock that shook the normal running of life in the world, the Covid-19 pandemic precipitated the digital turn in almost every aspect of our lives no matter which part of the world we are located in. The digital and the virtual have thus become the condition of life in 21st century.

Vindicating Naomi Klein’s “shock doctrine” formula (*The Shock Doctrine, The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Knopf, 2007), the Covid pandemic disrupted every aspect of life (work, education, government, mobility ...etc.) Using Klein’s central argument that Capitalism exploits “the public’s disorientation following massive collective shocks – wars, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters — to achieve control by imposing economic shock therapy,” we cannot help but notice that the Covid disaster is triggering the same pattern in imposing radical reforms that will drastically alter our lives.

In higher education, the covid-19 crisis has highlighted the role of digital technologies and in particular those pertaining to online education as an inevitable paradigm. Emerging in full force during the “shock” of the pandemic, the all-digital turn is creating a challenging situation where

these “Intellectual Technologies” to use Jack Goody’s expression, are forever altering “Knowledge.” As Bernard Stiegler stated, “Digital technology is in this respect an “intellectual technology” [...] in which the industrialization, automation, and performance of speed radically transform the conditions of *la vie de l’esprit* in all aspects: psycho-affective, economic, geopolitical, social, cultural, artistic, intellectual, and scientific.”

As a matter of fact, universities are compelled to accelerate their digital transition after a period of slackening pace of (often optional and complementary) digital contents in the form of moocs, and other online classes. The Covid 19 Pandemic had the effect of jumpstarting the digital machine, and this time it’s pretty serious, judging by the sums of money invested in infrastructure and training for faculty and students everywhere. The spotlight is on online teaching and learning platforms once again, except that this time it sanctions the legitimacy of the virtual classroom where students and teachers are geographically distant, but where the sought for IRL class interaction becomes virtual, impersonal and *deferred*.

This issue of *Ikhtilaf* aims at triggering reflection and debate on issues related to the forced digital conversion that the pandemic imposed on everyone and how the humanities scholars, as practitioners of critical thinking, are supposed to heed Bernard Stiegler’s 2012 call for a digital studies that “[...]should not be limited to the study of digital technologies [but] their generic object should be the study of intellectual techniques and technologies in general from the perspective of their effects on knowledge in general.”

While topics are free, preference will be given to papers that address digital technology from a critical perspective:

Suggested but not limited topics:

- Challenges, advantages and pitfalls of the new technology-driven pedagogy in higher education.
- Virtual teaching and the mission of the university in the 21st C.
- The digital conversion and critical thinking.
- Digitally-required reforms? Who would they really benefit, the public or the IT corporates?
- The digital and the transformation of human knowledge.
- The digital turn and the ecological imperative.
- The digital turn and the digital gap.
- The digital turn and the issues of power and control
- The digital muse of “Artificial Intelligence” and the prospects for an algorithm tyranny.
- The digital turn and human agency.

All submitted articles will be blind reviewed by a panel of peers.

Please send articles with a separate front page bearing names and affiliations to this email: ikhtilafjournal@gmail.com

SUBMISSION DEADLINE MARCH 15TH , 2022.

Submission guidelines:

Ikhtilaf Journal accepts original (not previously published) scholarly articles, book reviews, and review essays.

All submissions are blind-reviewed; therefore, authors' names should appear only on the cover page.

All submissions should include an abstract and a brief biographical statement which indicates current academic title and/or affiliation(s), recent and forthcoming publications (title, press, and publication date), and any other relevant information.

Format:

Contributions should be sent by email as a Microsoft Word (.docx) attached file. The journal uses the stylistic guidelines set forth in The Chicago Manual of Style. However, page references in the text of an essay are formatted in MLA style (parenthetical form). Use footnotes for all substantive comments and endnotes for bibliographic information. For emphasis *Italics* are preferred over **bold** face.

Each research manuscript should include the following:

- 1- A cover page that contains: a) Author's name and the title of the manuscript, b) An abstract that does not exceed 200 words, c) 4 to 6 keywords
- 2- The body of the paper
- 3- Bibliographical references
- 4- (Optional) Appendices, charts, and tables, if any.

All other contributions (book reviews, interviews etc...) should include the following:

- 1- The title of the piece
- 2- The body of the piece
- 3- Bibliographical references, if any.

Length:

While we are flexible with length, we prefer manuscripts to range between 4000 and 6000 words, including the title, abstract, keywords, footnotes, references, appendices, and any additional reference.

All other pieces could fall anywhere between 1000 and 4000 words, including the title, footnotes, bibliography, and any additional reference.

While *Ikhtilaf Journal* supports the free and indiscriminate access to information, it does not tolerate plagiarism under any form. Acts of plagiarism will instantaneously disqualify the manuscript from consideration and revoke its author's right to submit again.

Please send contributions to: ikhtilafjournal@gmail.com

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