Social Media – a critical introduction

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Chapter 1 – What is a Critical introduction to Social Media?

– On his sleeve: "The book is based on the normative assumption that we need a society and social media that benefit not just some of us, but all of us. This universal concern makes this book a critical book… Critical theory is especially connected to one name: Karl Marx." (p 11)
– Each other to exist: "The dialectical method identifies contradictions… Dialectics tries to show that and how contemporary society and it moments are shaped by contradictions." (p 14)
– Sublate: "Hegel used this notion as a language game in order to express that change of something means that (a) the current state is eliminated, (b) some aspects of the old state are preserved in the new state and (c) a new quality emerges in the new state." (p 15)
– Marxist Revolution! "Capitalism's class relation is another dialectical contradiction. Marx says that its sublation is not possible within capitalism, but requires to overcome (sic) this type of society and to build a new society." (p 16)
– Critical theory:
    o "If, in capitalism, an important contradiction is the one between the owning class that exploits the non-owning class, then the goal of critical theory is the representation of the interest of oppressed and exploited groups and overcoming the class society." (p 16)
    o "Critical theory rejects the argument that academia and science should and can be value-free." (p 17)
    o Critical theory holds not only that theory is always political, but also that critical theory should develop analyses of society that struggle against interests and ideas that justify domination and exploitation."

Chapter 2 – What is Social Media?

– Web 2.0 concepts per Michael Mandiberg (p 35):

    o corporate media favorite "user-generated content"
    o Henry Jenkin's media-industries-focused "convergence culture"
    o Jay Rosen's "the people formerly known as the audience"
    o the politically infused "participatory media"
    o Yochai Benkler's "process-oriented peer-production"
    o Tim O'Reilly's computer-programming-oriented "Web 2.0"
– Sociality not explained? "… an understanding of sociality: What does it mean to be and act in a social way? What is the social all about?... social theory. It is a subfield of sociology…" (p 37)
– Media: "... techno-social systems. They have a technological level of artefacts that enable and constrain a social level of human activities that create knowledge that is produced, diffused and consumed with the help of the artefacts of the technological level." (p 37)

- Internet as techno-social system: "The technological structure is a network that produces and reproduces human actions and social networks and is itself produced and reproduced by such practices." (see Table 2.1 Different understandings of sociality on the web, p 45)

Chapter 3 – Social Media as Participatory Culture (aka Jenkins bashing)

- The non-expert creation of culture: "Participatory culture is a term that is often used for designating the involvement of uses, audiences, consumers and fans in the creation of culture and content." (p 52)
- Cheer leaders, not critical thinkers: "The problem of Carpentier's political reductionistic concept of (media) participation is that it implies that full 'participation' can be achieved without letting people participate in the ownership of the organizations in which they work, as long as they are involved in decision-making." (p 56)
- Definition: "**Reductionism** means that a certain aspect of the world is explained based on one specific dimension, although other dimensions also matter."
- Definition: "**Essentialism** is a form of argumentation that does not see phenomena as historical, which means that they have a beginning and an end and can be changed by human action.. are declared to exist necessarily and forever." per Marx *Fetish thinking*
- Selling it back to us at twice the price: "An internet that is dominated by corporations that accumulate capital by exploiting and commodifying users can in the theory of participatory democracy never be participatory, and the cultural expressions on it cannot be an expression of participation." (p 57)
- Drinking Kool-Aid or covering their backs? "... one gets the impression that scholars want to rationalize their own fandom and their love for commodity culture by trying to identify progressive political aspects of the consumption and logic of cultural commodities... it makes a difference whether one sees and celebrated this fondness as an act of resistance or not." (p 59)
- Big good? Small bad? Mixed messages: "But gathering a large number of people on one site is a power in itself, whereas gathering some people on many dispersed sites fragments the public, results in 'a huge number of isolated issue publics' Habermas 2006, 423) and risks 'cultural relativism' that neglects that democracy is in need of 'some common normative dimensions' and 'more generalized media' (Garnham 1992, 369)." (p 63)
- Surplus labour i.e. profits: "Exploitation is measured as the degree of unpaid labour from which companies benefit at the expense of labour... cultural worth is seen as legitimatization of exploitation..." (p 64)

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