Rescuing the Humanities One Website at a Time

Society for Digital Humanities

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Introduction

When Susan Brown e-mailed me about the Society for Digital Humanities/Societé pour l'étude des Media Interactifs Award for Outstanding Achievement I thought she must have had the wrong Margaret Conrad. This is a major honour and I wondered if I really deserved it. When I read further, I rather hoped that Susan did, indeed, have the wrong Margaret Conrad. She noted: "It is common with this award to invite the recipient to give a keynote talk at our conference. I hope you will be willing to attend Congress in Fredericton this year to receive this award and to give an award keynote." It should be about forty minutes long, she later informed me. With scheduling problems dogging this Congress moment, Susan probably wishes that she had never heard of the award-winning Margaret Conrad.

What do I have to say to a meeting of digital humanists? Most of what I think about the impact of information and communications technologies (ICTs) on humanities scholarship has been covered in my Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association in 2007 and in a paper co-authored with Sasha Mullally published in *Atlantis* in 2010.[1] After considerable reflection, I decided to focus on one of my current preoccupations, the role of digital humanities in rescuing the arts disciplines from their current discontents. It was my conviction when I set out to create the Atlantic Canada Portal and the Atlantic Canada Virtual Archives that every scholar worthy of the name was obliged to take the new communications technologies very

seriously. I am even more convinced of this position today than when I embarked on this scary intellectual journey nearly a decade ago.

My learning curve for becoming a digital humanist—a concept I could never have imagined at the beginning of my career as a university teacher in 1969—was extremely steep. Without the expertise of Alan Burk and the splendid team that he gathered around him at the University of New Brunswick's Electronic Text Centre, I would have been helpless. Each project involved scores of people—computer programmers, technicians, students, translators, designers, community stakeholders, librarians, archivists, even lawyers. In retrospect, I concluded that I could have written several books in the time it took me to produce the six websites for the Atlantic Canada Virtual Archives and with far fewer headaches. Even so, I enjoyed being in the vortex of the Internet's rapid development over the past decade, for which the term "moving target" is too slow a concept to convey how fast even history—and perhaps especially history—is speeding along in the digital age. With communications dissolving the borders between academic and popular approaches to the past, amateurs and professionals, history and heritage, we historians, however defined, are left scrambling to keep up.

Being Human in History

My assessment of trends in digital humanities is shaped by the two overarching insights that I have gleaned from the study of history:

First, the success of revolutions—political, technological, or otherwise—is predicated on bringing life-affirming values through the period of chaos and liminality inspired by new ideas and practices.[2] Nowhere is it written that progress is embedded in our DNA; history offers many examples of societies going terribly wrong. Sweeping everything away to create a blank slate is

never very wise and often opens opportunities for injustices to be reinvented. The French Revolution, in which whole classes of people were demonized and even the calendar was briefly subject to revolutionary revision, is a good case in point. When the Gutenberg printing press arrived on the scene in the middle of the fifteenth century, one of the early publications was *Malleus Maleficarum*, Latin for "Hammer of the Wicked" (1486), in which a Roman Catholic Church Inquisitor, Heinrich Kramer, provided justification and procedures for rooting out witches, most of them, of course, women. It took more than two centuries and tens of thousands of lives before the witch craze was finally put mostly to rest in the early eighteenth century. An article by Kirsten C. Uszkalo and Susan Liepert in a recent issue of *Digital Studies* analyzes some of the texts that document this tragedy.[3]

    Second, history offers an abundance of evidence that social justice, like websites, is never done.[4] In all times and places, people singly and together have tried to reform attitudes and conditions they believed to be injurious to the human species. They never fully achieved their ideals—we never do—but at least they strived toward a better end, rather than allowing harm to prevail unchallenged. To put it another way, social justice is like taking a bath. You have to do it every day or pretty soon you start to stink. I first heard this smart statement from Maude Barlow, the Chair of the Council of Canadians, but it probably originated with Tommy Douglas. Google offered me no help whatsoever in establishing authorship, but in the process of my search I was directed to a headline "You stink, therefore I am," in the *Boston Globe*, 2 May 2004. It framed a report on a conference of philosophers who were pondering the meaning of disgust, which included a presentation by Martha Nussbaum, whose book, *Hiding from Humanity: Shame, Disgust and the Law*, had been published that year.[5] This serendipitous finding became the starting point for my talk today; that is, social justice.

My own career has been blessed by three large areas of research, each of them located on the exciting edge of knowledge creation and each bound up with issues of social justice: regional underdevelopment, women's studies, and digital humanities. Since Martha Nussbaum has written convincingly on the value of the humanities in our troubled times I will not belabour this point here, except to reiterate the main thrust of her argument: that the arts are essential for helping us to reflect on the human condition and that their vulnerability in the academy underscores the attempt by forces known and unknown to wrest control of the GPS for finding our way in the world.[6] Nussbaum came to her position from her earlier works, *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986) and *Cultivating Humanity* (1997), which explored our susceptibility as a species to unjust behaviour and the need to defend and reform liberal education.[7] Her message is even more salient today than it was a decade or so ago. When the foundations of societies based on agriculture came to a dramatic end in the twentieth century, the industrial order seemed to usher in a golden age of human rights and social well-being in the three decades after the Second World War. We now beginning to understand that it was the last hurrah for Western societies before long-standing institutions and values began to collapse, hurried along by a communications revolution that is currently having its way with us.

The Humanities under Siege

As most of us now recognize, the liberal arts (a term that originally included the sciences) are under siege and greatly in need of rescuing. A recent article in *The New York Review of Books* by Simon Head outlines "The Grim Threat to British Universities," of recent government reforms.[8] During and after the reign of Margaret Thatcher, universities in the UK were subject to deep restructuring, an exercise informed by the business model approach pioneered by MIT and the Harvard Business School. We have all become familiar with the new vocabulary that swept

across the industrial world and all academic disciplines: Total Quality Management, Benchmarking, Management by Objectives, Key Performance Indicators, Balanced Scorecard, and Matrix, among others. In England, an aircraft hangar was called into service in 2001 to accommodate the mountain of paper resulting from the Funding Council's assessment exercise involving 52,409 academics in 67 disciplines. (One assumes that the assessment data now are submitted in digital form.) The template for assessments applies to classics, philosophy, and history in the same way as to medicine, engineering, and chemistry. As a result of this "audit culture," articles trump books because they are quicker to produce, new journals are deemed less worthy than established ones, and excellence becomes secondary to grantsmanship. Genuine creativity, which includes dead ends and failed projects, flies out the window.

Although Canada and the United States are less centralized in university governance than England, the trends have taken root here as well. **W**e are all familiar with the Research Assessment Exercise, which requires us to fill in forms every year or two for the research office. Inevitably, it is the money we bring in rather than the research we put out that enables the university to score high or low in relation to other institutions of its kind. The most "advanced" university in the new management approaches appears to be Texas A & M at College Station, where even salaries are determined by a profit and loss exercise—let's not go there today. The main point I wish to underscore here is that the humanities fare poorly in this audit environment. Where are the patents and profits, we are asked? At best, the arts are now perceived as a hotbed of subversion against the new funding and governance processes. At worst, they are dismissed as irrelevant.

The shift from subversion (sometimes an honorable pursuit) to irrelevance is troubling. Again in England, where neoliberalism seems to have gone viral in the truest sense of that word,

the pressure on the arts reached a new level following the release in October 2010 of a report entitled "Securing a Sustainable Future for Education in the UK."[9] Its principal author is Lord Browne, former CEO of British Petroleum. Earlier this year, the English government announced that beginning in 2012 it would let market mechanisms prevail in the funding of the arts, humanities, and social sciences as suggested in Browne's report. Scholars in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have so far remained protected by their own parliaments, but for how long? This policy will almost certainly ensure that only modern and mostly British history will be justified by student numbers and that whole fields in the humanities will go to the wall.[10] Need I say more than that, since 2009, higher education in the UK has been nested in the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills? George Orwell must be churning in his grave.

As Kevin Kee, John Bonnett, and others have noted, digital humanities is a fragile new field, finding its way, spawning new journals, dividing and subdividing, often dependent on one or two faculty, and even those usually cross-appointed.[11] Digital humanities does not even warrant a place in the annual *CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education in Canada*. Clearly, such a fledgling field embedded in various disciplines does not fare well when subjected to business models. After all, we have lots of dead ends and failed projects to pursue. And we do not have a lot of slack to cut. One person can sometimes make the difference between success and failure. In my field, for example, the Centre for History and New Media at George Mason University, established in 1994, led the way in helping historians to engage information and communication technologies. Its star scholar was Roy Rosenzweig who, with Daniel J. Cohen, produced *Digital History* (2006),[12] which assured historians that the promise of the new communications technology far outweighs the perils. Who, they sensibly asked, would want to blunt the exciting prospect of searching across federated platforms for all primary and secondary

sources relating to our scholarly interests; of forging alliances with like-minded researchers, academic and otherwise, in the digital universe; and of opening to everyone the right to create and access knowledge? It was also Roy Rosenzweig, in an article published in the June 2006 issue of *Journal of American History*, who encouraged me to stop worrying and love *Wikipedia* and the open source environment generally.[13] When Professor Rosenzweig passed away in October 2007, it was a great loss.[14] Fortunately, he still lives in a collection of his essays published a few months ago, and in the recent decision to name the Centre for History and New Media after him.[15] People do matter and we need more stars like Roy Rosenzweig in our field, but—and this is important—we also need ordinary practitioners—like me—toiling away in the digital vineyard. In the end, we must all be digital humanists.

Digital approaches are the only way that humanities will survive the current revolutionary changes in our world. While print will continue to circulate, the preferred mode of communication is now the Internet and our goal as humanists is to communicate, both to our colleagues and to the larger public. Fortunately, university policy makers are still entranced by technology, communications technology in particular. When the UK government announced that it would direct research funding toward "strategic priorities" in the arts, these included "communities and big society; civic values and active citizenship, including ethics in public life; creative and digital economy; cultural heritage; language based disciplines; and interdisciplinary collaborations with a range of STEM subjects." As that great modern sage Leonard Cohen put it in the lyrics for his song *Anthem*, "There is a crack in everything" and "that is how the light gets in." One crack here is "creative and digital economy." Although it is unlikely that many academics will become rich from digital humanities patents, technology is all about the human and the social, and failing to recognize this insight is seriously problematic.

Digital approaches are the route to our survival, but they also serve as an obstacle to our larger mission. While we need to attend to the technical side of what we do, this is not all that we should be about. [16] Humanities are concerned, first and foremost, with how to live in this troubled world. As Chad Gaffield, the President of the Social Sciences and Research Council, outlined in his keynote address to a recent symposium on "Research on the Digital Economy," the creators of digital tools are now recognizing that it is the users of these tools who are increasingly flooding the field. [17] This could be a turning point for the humanities as we employ digital technology to breach the walls of the neoliberal template, to transcend the commodification of humanities inquiry, and to reach those who benefit from the knowledge generated by the liberal arts. Without such an inspiring vision, humanists and perhaps the planet as we know it will have little hope of surviving.

I doubt I need to convince this audience that it is incumbent upon us to bring our disciplines into the twenty-first century and to nurture a field called digital humanities to help us to develop best practices, supportive networks, and, above all, ways of becoming compelling advocates for what we do. We are long overdue for a concerted effort to make ICTs the centerpiece of the arts, with funding to match. Our disciplines do matter and, what's more, they engage the public in important ways. I will elaborate on this point by turning to the field I know best, but, first let me backtrack a little.

Negotiating the Minefield

My career in digital humanities has been devoted to both of the insights mentioned earlier. I desperately wanted to bring some of the conventions and content relating to the field of history

into the digital age and I was interested in social justice issues, in particular to inclusivity with respect both to content and to how it gets there.

On the first matter, the digital age brought shocks to everyone as conventions, processes, and vocabularies mashed together. I can recall how annoyed I was when Microsoft WORD used the abbreviation "pg" instead of "p" to denote "page." I eventually got over that but so, too, did Microsoft, which now writes out "page." It is these small triumphs that give us the courage to move on. There were larger concerns, of course: websites with no equivalent of a table of contents or index, no acknowledgement of who produced the material, and worse, no acknowledgement of the sources, which were more or less plagiarized. In many online initiatives, content served as second fiddle to form which had to be flashy and eye-catching. Anyone who bothers to think about it knows that form and content are never mutually exclusive.

The issue of inclusivity as it relates to digital humanities cut several ways for me. One was the necessity of bringing the Atlantic region into cyberspace. When I came to the field of Canadian history in the 1960s, a common view prevailed that nothing ever happened in the Atlantic Provinces and, when they were mentioned at all in historical texts, a conservative stereotype substituted for research.[18] Most of my career focused on filling some of the gaps in the research on the region and embedding Atlantic Canada in Canadian history textbooks. What particularly concerned me was the lack of attention to the eighteenth century in Canada's past, except, of course, in the history of Quebec, for which the conquest and its fallout loom large. What are now the Atlantic provinces of Canada also congealed in the eighteenth century. The narratives are rich, if tragic—among them the dislocation of 14,000 Acadians, the arrival of 35,000 Loyalist refugees from the United States, and the displacement of 4000 Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy. And the documentary evidence of these defining historical

moments is magnificently abundant. The Atlantic Canada Virtual Archives is devoted primarily to those extraordinary eighteenth-century documents, which testify to major adjustments that are still playing out today in the region.

I was also concerned that women not be left behind in the practice and content of digital humanities. Having been on the ground floor of the second wave women's movement, I was all too aware of how exclusionary practices work. My concern was not ill-placed. As Sasha Mullally and I have argued, the digital revolution and the stalling of political and social movements for women's equality, in Canada and elsewhere, are linked. One of the most remarkable findings of a study on women and ICTs in 21 countries, reported in 2006, is that women's representation in ICT fields tends to be relatively lower in countries that score high on liberal egalitarian value scales. Since the 1980s, the percentage of women in ICT disciplines in Australia, Europe, and North America has actually declined.[19] This trend is reflected in that well-recognized symbol of the digital age, *Wikipedia*, in which men account for 87% of the contributions.[20]

The systemic barriers against women's engagement in ICTs are not new or unusual. They reflect similar structures of inequality that feminists note in other institutions: political, military, religious, professional, and familial. Of course, if we count women's work in data processing centres, hospitals, and various service positions, all of which now require considerable skill in ICTs, women are present and accounted for but, as usual, at the bottom of the hierarchy. My quick head count of the authors of articles in *Digital Studies* and the *Digital Humanities Quarterly* indicates that women represent about one-quarter of the offerings, much the same percentage as their involvement in ICT occupations. It should be at least 40% if we are reflecting the number of women in humanities disciplines, which according to the *CAUT Almanac* for 2010-2011 is 42.9%.

It is always difficult to find a one-stop solution for such inequities other than quotas which have been thoroughly discredited by those who fear them. Yet, we know that quotas work. When I was entered university in 1963 tough quotas prevailed and, as a result, less than 10% of the doctors, lawyers, and engineers were women and minorities. Although aptitude tests suggested that I would make a good lawyer, it never occurred to me to become one because I never saw a woman in such a role. I do not endorse exclusionary quotas but I do strive for a rough balance. In terms of content for the Atlantic Canada Virtual Archives, two websites focused on women's documents (The McQueen Family Letters, Loyalist Women), one on Aboriginal Land Petitions, and one on Black Loyalists, and two on white men (New Brunswick Loyalist Edward Winslow and Prince Edward Island proprietor John MacDonald). We only have to make balance a priority and it comes easily enough. More difficult was maintaining a gender balance for people hired for my projects. In assembling teams to do the hard work that digital humanities demand, I was governed by the 40/60 principle. Gender does not matter in a hire *unless* the number of men or women drops below 40 percent. Because of the number of women involved in the project, female students were attracted to Portal positions; I had to work to find men to work in our teams. People tend to feel more comfortable working with others like themselves so it is incumbent upon us in powerful positions to be conscious of the biases of our practices so that balance prevails over prejudices.

As a result of working on Portal projects, students developed skills not only in digital humanities but also in collaborative team work. Two young men working with me have recently been hired at Mount Saint Vincent University, one in the history department and the other in the library. Skills in digital history and collaborative team work, both of which I emphasized in my letters of recommendation, were both key in them being hired in a university that prides itself on

being a champion of women's equality. Clearly, we need to think about how to encourage the systematic integration of such skills into all of our humanities programs. And here we have a great challenge that must be addressed as soon as possible. In a number of universities, digital humanities courses fail to attract large numbers of students. Unless we make new media an integral component of our courses, arts students will be ill-equipped to move beyond social media—important though they are—in their communications skills. In other words, humanists must develop a whole new way of teaching to accompany the communications revolution.

At a fundamental level, of course, I am concerned that two centuries of academic history not be lost as we hurtle into the future. Contrary to the present-minded ethos that shapes our perceptions of the world, people care about the past and the Internet has made it possible for people to engage it more directly. I am currently involved in a SSHRC-funded Community-University Research Alliance project which is researching how ordinary people engage the past in their everyday lives. (Incidentally, it was Roy Rosenzweig, along with David Thelen, who pioneered in tackling this difficult question.[21]) Although the centerpiece of our project is an old-fashioned phone survey (perhaps the last one of such a scope in a world where smart phones dominate), this, too, is an exercise in digital history because it would have been difficult to analyze the 3,419 interviews without the new technologies. We asked our respondents, among other things, what history topics were of interest and important to them, what activities relating to the past they engaged in, and how history helped them make sense of their lives. I do not have time here to share the many fascinating findings of our research but it is clear that history matters to most people. More than 95% of our respondents were engaged in one of more of the 13 activities relating to the past on which we inquired—for example, taking photographs, saving heirlooms, documenting family history, watching history movies, visiting archives, historic sites,

and museums, and consulting Internet history sites. Canadians were much like people in the United States and Australia in their historical interests and activities but differed considerably from the citizens of Russia, who seem to be much less engaged with history of any kind than people in Western nations.[22] Surprisingly to us, Francophone respondents from Quebec—but not New Brunswick Acadians—also expressed a lower interest in history than Anglophone Canadians. These findings raise new and important questions about history, identity, and agency in the world, with the result that exploring historical consciousness has become something of a growth industry. Scholars in Finland and the Netherlands are currently following in our footsteps.

If you think history does not matter, think again. As we explain in the introduction to our forthcoming book, the past is always with us—in our DNA, in our laws, and in the names of our streets and communities. Every person embodies and acts on beliefs and assumptions based on interpretations of the past. With eighteenth-century treaties and proclamations relating to Aboriginal rights the nub of game-changing court cases in Canada and heritage industries the source of economic well-being in many communities, interest in the past is more than just academic.

People spend impressive amounts of time and money pursuing family and community history. Take scrapbooking, for example. As a pastime, it is more popular than the game of golf among Americans, with one in three households involved in preserving the past in a scrapbook. Karina Hoff, who has conducted extensive research on scrapbooking in the United States, argues that this practice, while often focused on the family, represents more than a family matter. "Citizenship," she maintains, "comes by way of scrapbooking as it offers a very visible form and forum through which scrappers show what and whom they care about, how they live and where

they fit into society at large."[23] Our survey suggests that many Canadians share with their American neighbours this approach to documenting their sense of belonging, but no government has suggested that we should corner the scrapbook market. Not surprisingly perhaps, Disney figures prominently in this industry. Inevitably, *digiscrap*, that is, digital scrapbooking, is the next big thing.

And consider the extraordinary success of *ancestry.ca*. We see advertisements for it in the popular media and people pay between $9.95 and $24.95 a month (national or international memberships) for the privilege of accessing the site. It is unlikely that any of our documentary collections on the Atlantic Canada Virtual Archives will generate the traffic that *Ancestry.ca* enjoys, or even the popularity of the online version of Martha Ballard's diary that came to life under the expert hand of the Pulitzer Prize winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, but we can all aspire to such an outcome.[24]

The issue, then, is not the relevance or even the profitability of history—or literature, or philosophy. The same arguments can be made for each of our humanities disciplines. And the creative arts are even more relevant and engaging. Some of us can remember when the rock group ABBA became a significant component of the Swedish GDP, this at a time when Volvo and IKEA were doing well. According to *Wikipedia*, Sweden is the third largest exporter of music after the US and the UK. (Why is Canada not in this position?) The challenge before us, surely, is how to get the resources and faculty to sustain digital humanities, to rejuvenate its online open-access journals, and to make a difference in the world.

It is urgent that we work with others of like mind to bring some balance back into our universities. In this mission, I am no longer very worried about having stand-alone digital humanities departments. It strikes me that the way that Richard Cunningham and his

collaborators describe the accretion of courses across disciplines at Acadia University is probably the way to go.[25] This is also what happened in Canadian Studies and Women's Studies, two interdisciplinary programs at Acadia, in which I participated in an earlier life. It may surprise some of the younger people in the room that there were no courses on women when I attended university in the 1960s and very few courses on Canada. Such offerings only exist now because we fought, often against surprisingly strong opposition, to get them into the curriculum. When I retired two years ago I was determined that my digital humanities interests be continued and worked hard to have someone replace me. In the same way, the UNB's chief librarian, John Teskey, moved quickly to find Erik Moore as a replacement for Alan Burk when he retired. One person can make a difference, especially in small universities.

What Next?

It is now time to put shoulder to the wheel to get digital humanities over the next hump. Our successes will not come without careful planning and hard work. And we will not be very popular with some of our academic colleagues. As Willard McCarthy has recently argued:

> …our primary business is creating and fostering a new culture of research that as it develops puts quite unusual demands on our social arrangements and those involved in them. We must attract and retain people to help build this new culture, which in its blending of technical with traditional scholarly modes of work puts stress on notions of status and interpersonal relations as well as what we consider research actually to be.[26]

McCarty's concerns, not surprisingly, also echo my own:

> What I fear most of all for us is not the cuts to funding, which holding to our purpose we can survive, but the loss of that purpose through complicity in the industrialization of the

humanities. What I fear is that we find ourselves in Charlie Chaplin's place in *Modern Times* (1936), on some production-line, making widgets for a purpose over which we have no say and which we are likely to have forgotten. Such a fate we cannot survive. Instead of a research practice it means a typing pool sort of dying that produces step-'n-fetchit facilitators who are safe from all risk by conforming to the bureaucrat's template of knowledge-work. What I fear most to see is us conforming to such a sort of dying even before it is imposed—rushing to conform, longing for the chains. My desire, as urgent as any revolutionary's, is for a field populated by brilliant, courageous and ferociously non-conformist intellectual adventurers who live to find things out, who live to play in sunlit fields of knowledge.

I am inspired by such a dream and all of my research efforts have, by and large, played out in such sunlit fields. Future generations of humanities scholars may not be so fortunate. Although the storm clouds are gathering fast in Canada, we have the capacity to change the game plan and the Society for Digital Humanities is well positioned to take a leadership role in shaping the future of universities and of our society. The steps are simple to state, harder to execute:

First, we need to work in collaboration with SSHRC and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences to develop a working definition of digital humanities and conduct our own audit of its practitioners in universities. Without this information, we will not know what we are talking about and risk delivering a discordant message.[27]

Second, we need to document the resources available for digital humanities in each Canadian university. By this I mean understanding how digital humanities scholars get the job done—through a laboratory, centre, institute, or on their own. Who hosts and maintains the

server, for example?

Third, we need a running tally of the funding, both public and private, focused on digital humanities projects and facilities. This information will help us make the case that more university resources should be directed to arts faculties in general and humanities disciplines in particular for our digital work.

Fourth, we need to marshal the arguments for bringing the humanities into the twenty-first century unharmed and enhanced in their potential. As suggested above, the arguments can easily be made that what we do is relevant, but we have not done a very effective job of it as a collective enterprise. All too often we have lost sight of the big picture and refused to assign significance to what we do. We know the fundamental questions that the humanities address. They include: What is the nature of the good life here and now? What does it mean to be human in the face of scientific developments? What are the options for the human species, which is expanding like locusts across the face of the earth? How do we address the inequities that unregulated greed has unleashed? How do we encourage life-affirming values in a world where the default mode seems to be anger, hatred, and violence?

Finally, we need to mobilize resources, human and financial, to achieve these goals. This, of course, is the hardest of the steps involved. How much easier it is to keep our eyes focused on our fascinating texts and technological challenges rather than collaborating to bring the values represented by the humanities through the current revolutionary turmoil. It is, I submit, not a question of either/or, but of both. Science, engineering, and technology currently have the ear of those who fund higher education but nowhere is it written that it has to be this way.

In his commentary on developments in English universities, James Vernon, a professor of

history at the University of California, Berkeley, argued that, despite the strong protest from historians in England about recent government policies, they spoke in many tongues from different institutional perspectives. It required, he suggested, "a more coordinated and professional response." "It may be," he concluded, that "you cannot fight the systemic transformation of public education through a patchwork of professional organizations."[28]

So we have difficult challenges ahead. As humans, we make history, not always, of course, in conditions of our own choosing. But there are cracks large enough in the current template to bring in some light and give us hope that our humanist questioning can make a difference in what the next chapter in human history looks like. Let's get on with making history.

Notes

[1] Margaret Conrad, "Public History and its Discontents, or History in the Age of *Wikipedia*," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, Saskatoon 2007* (Ottawa 2008): 1-26, and with Sasha Mullally, "Women, History, and Information and Communications Technologies," *Atlantis* 32, 4 (Spring 2010): 43-54.

[2] My thinking on this matter is informed by Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1921* (London: Abacus, 1995).

[3] Kirsten C. Uszkalo and Susan Liepert, "Searching with Sathan: The English Witch's Familiar as Interface Model," *Digital Studies* 1, 3 (2009) http://www.digitalstudies.org/ojs/index.php/digital_studies/article/view/162/226

[4] Susan Brown et al., "Published but Never Done: The Tension Between Projection and Completion in Digital Humanities Research," *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 3, 2 (Spring 2009). http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/3/2/000040/000040.html

[5] Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Shame, Disgust and the Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[6] Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[7] Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defence of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[8] Simon Head, "The Grim Threat to British Universities," The New York Review of Books, 13 January 2011 http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/grim-threat-british-universities; Jack Schuster and Martin Finkelstein, *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) and Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

[9] http://www.scribd.com/doc/39158011/The-Browne-Report-Securing-a-Sustainable-Future-for-Higher-Education

[10] James Vernon, "The State They Are In: History and Public Education in England," *Perspectives on History* (March 2011): 19-22 and Stefan Collini, "Research must not be tied to politics," *The Guardian*, 1 April 2011.

[11] Kevin Kee and John Bonnett, "Transitions: A Prologue and Preview of Digital Humanities Research in Canada," *Digital Studies* 1, 2 (2009) http://www.digitalstudies.org/ojs/index.php/digital_studies/article/view/167/222; Patrik Svensson, "The Landscape of Digital Humanities," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 4, 1 (Summer 2010). http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/4/1/000080/000080.html

[12] Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). Available online at: http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/

[13] Roy Rosenzweig, "Can History be Open Source? *Wikipedia* and the Future of the Past," *The Journal of American History* (June 2006): 117-146.

[14] Sheila A. Brennan and T. Mills Kelly, "Why Collecting History Online is Web 1.5 ," Center for History and New Media, Case Study, March 2009, http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=47

[15] Roy Rosenzweig, *Clio Wired: The Future of the Past in the Digital Age*, ed. Anthony Grafton (New York: Perseus Books, 2010) http://www.docstoc.com/docs/69764556/Clio-Wired

[16] I am grateful to Alan Burk for this insight.

[17] Chad Gaffield, Keynote to a symposium on "Research on the Digital Economy," 1 June 2011, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

[18] The classic statement on this matter can be found in E.R. Forbes, *Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989).

[19] Maria Charles and Karen Bradley, "A Matter of Degrees: Female Underrepresentation in Computer Science Programs Cross-Nationally," *Women and Information Technology: Research on Underrepresentation*, ed. J. McGrath Cohoon and William Aspray (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 183-204; Sophia Huyer, "Women, ICT and the Information Society: Global Perspectives and Initiatives," Proceedings of the International Symposium on *Women and ICT*: *Creating Global Transformation*, ed. Claudia Morrell and Jo Sanders (Baltimore, MD: Information and Communications Technology Council, 2005). www.portal.acm.org/toc.cfm?id=1117417.

[20] Andrew Lavalee, "Only 13% of Wikipedia Contributors are Women, Study Says," *Digits: Technology News and Insights* [Wall Street Journal Blog], 32 August 2009. www.blogs.wsj.com/digits/2009/08/31/only-13-of-wikipedia-contributors-are-women-study-says.

[21] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). A similar study was conducted in Australia by Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton. The results of their study can be found in a special issue of *Australian Cultural History* 23 (2003).

[22] Zhan T. Toshchenko, "Historical Consciousness and Historical Memory: An Analysis of the Current Situation," *Russian Studies in History* 49, 1 (Summer 2010): 37–52.

[23] Karina Hoff, "Something you can actually pick up: Scrapbooking as a form and forum of cultural citizenship," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, 3 (2006): 363-384.

[24] *Do History*, http://dohistory.org/home.html

[25] Richard Cunningham et al, "Humanities HyperMedia Centre @ Acadia University: An Invitation to Think about Higher Education," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 2, 1 (Summer 2008) http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/2/1/000016/000016.html

[26] Willard McCarty, "Look Down, Go Down," A Vision for the Digital Humanities in Ireland: Where do we go from here?" Digital Humanities Observatory, Dublin, 31 March 2011, 2-3. http://www.mccarty.org.uk/essays/McCarty,%20Look%20down%20go%20down.pdf

[27] One digital humanities scholar recently suggested that *Wikipedia* has it essentially right: "The digital humanities, also known as humanities computing, is a field of study, research, teaching, and invention concerned with the intersection of computing and the disciplines of the humanities. It is methodological by nature and interdisciplinary in scope. It involves investigation, analysis, synthesis, and presentation of information in electronic form. It studies how these media affect the disciplines in which they are used, and what these disciplines have to contribute to our knowledge of computing."   See: Matthew G. Kirschenbaum," What is digital Humanities and What's It Doing in English Departments," *ADE Bulletin* 150 (2010) http://mkirschenbaum.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/ade-final.pdf

[28] Vernon, "The State They Are In," 22.