

4Humanities@UCSB Meeting 1, 2013-14
November 7, 2013

Agenda for Meeting:

1. Introductions

- Research Focus Group co-conveners:
Linda Adler-Kassner, Claudio Fogu, Alan Liu
- Lead research assistant for 4Humanities & 4Hum@UCSB:
Lindsay Thomas
- Self-introductions of meeting participants

2. The International 4Humanities Initiative

- Mission: *Humanities advocacy assisted by digital humanities community.*
- Current leadership: *Christine Henseler (Union C.), Alan Liu (UCSB), Geoffrey Rockwell (McMaster U.), Stéfan Sinclair (McGill U.), Melissa Terras (U. College London)*
- Local chapters: *UCSB, CSU Northridge, McGill U., U. College London, NY6, [UCLA?]*
- Projects:
 - Humanities, Plain & Simple
 - Humanities Infographics ("The Humanities Matter" in the wild)
 - Backpack Mini-documentaries
 - Humanities Showcase
 - WhatEvery1Says
 - [Student design contest?]
- Upcoming Events:
 - Local:
 - Future 4Hum@UCSB meetings (discussion meetings / practicums: the global humanities, humanities makers, the humanities in the sciences / the sciences in the humanities)
 - Charrette for UCSB, CSUN, [and UCLA?] local chapters (last year's charrette)
 - Elsewhere:
 - NY6 Public forum on "Defining and Framing the Humanities Today." Union College, NY. 10 February 2014.

3. Today's Discussion: "The Heart of the Matter" report:

- See <http://4humanities.org/2013/10/4humanitiesucsb-meeting-nov-7-2013/> for meeting materials, including:
 - Annotated copy of report to facilitate discussion (password protected)
 - Outline of report's structure, specific proposals, and some interesting issues (by A. Liu)
 - "The Heart of the Matter" Topic-Modeled (A Preliminary Experiment) post
 - "The Heart of the Matter" Visualized post
- What forms can be output from different forms of digital analysis for humanities advocacy?

- Frames for advocacy: Need to change the frames for advocacy for the humanities. We can argue against the content of the frames themselves but if we don't change the frame we can't change the overall arguments/impacts.
- Issues in "Heart of the Matter" document (from Alan's outline):
 - Humanities *and* social sciences: why is there less coverage of the social sciences in this document?
 - Relative priority of citizenship, workforce productivity, and security
 - Humanities as "keeper" of history/memory: what is view of the humanities that we want to put forward as a group? "Traditional" view vs. more "cutting edge" issues in the humanities in the academy
 - Liberal arts: this document fully identifies the humanities with liberal arts education in America. This does not correspond with how the humanities are viewed in the rest of the world; we need to discuss why this happens.
 - Education and digital technologies: there is a sly endorsement of MOOCs in document
 - Research: Where does research fit in a discussion of the humanities?
 - Humanities and war: What is the relationship of the humanities to war?
 - Public communications: What do we conceive public relations to be?
 - Alt-ac careers: Humanists should be supported in endeavors outside of the academy and in cultural institutions and museums
 - Global humanities: "globalism," "internationalism," and "leadership"

General discussion of the report:

- "The Heart of the Matter" is instrumental in argument it pitches for the value of the humanities; furthermore, this value is individually-based. When you make an argument for humanities to the public, where does the innate good argument fit in repertoire of arguments that are otherwise concerned with instrumentalizing humanities?
- But we can't just depend on arguments about innate values. The humanities are not innately good, but we can say they offer practical tools for caring for the self. Is this one possible route so that we don't have to say that we are either practical or innately good.
- Discussions of the humanities need to be framed within context of the public good. The word public is used without any actual substantive notion of "public-ness." The concept of the public has been evacuated from the document.
 - Public means either "for the good of the private individual" or "for the good of the state." There is no other conception of the public in the document.
- Is there a halfway point between purely qualitative discussion and things that people see as "measurable outcomes" (for instrumental policy makers)?
- Can we create an intermediary figure, a "wraparound" concept, that will get us toward the larger understanding of a larger civic public? Need to create this zone that is not jerry-mandered, that is not specific to your institution.
- Conclusions of the commission were already built into the call for the commission because the call for the commission asks for instrumental values/reasons.
- Document doesn't include anything about positive contributions of the humanities to human knowledge.
- Issue of basic research in the sciences vs "basic research" in the humanities. Sciences interlace basic research alongside high-impact, immediately legible inventions and

advances. Sciences are also better at connecting historic basic research to advances of the past.

- How do we connect to audiences that we never talk to? How do we try to form some coalition to work together on these issues?
 - Eileen Joy notes that this is the mission of the BABEL working group. BABEL gets scientists to do “humanist” projects:
<http://blogs.cofc.edu/babelworkinggroup/>
- We need to perform the humanities. This means to collaborate across disciplines and outside the academy. We need to perform human beings being interested around something – an intellectual topic, a book everyone reads, things that can bring a coalition of people together. The humanities isn’t a thing; it’s an event.
 - Henry Turner’s interest in incorporation
- If we care about advocacy for the humanities; we need to create institutional possibilities for advocacy. What if institutions gave course release to professors to be public humanities faculty members? They would be out in the community, keep a blog, be the face of the humanities for the university, etc.
- Transferrable knowledge: can we make claims about transferrable knowledge in the humanities? Can we make claims about Grand Challenge competitions? We need to make the case that the grand challenges for the next generation – hunger, climate change, education – have humanistic components.
- Exactly how invested are we in a model of general education/liberal arts in which the humanities has its place? How invested are we in a funding model in which agencies separate out social sciences from the humanities? This is a rat’s nest of issues.
 - There is something peculiarly provincial about this argument. We are locked into idea that a) humanities are off by themselves (w/out social sciences) in terms of research, and b) humanities = liberal arts.

4. Next meeting?

- Nov. 21 4Hum@UCSB workshop on digital-humanities methods and tactics for studying/using the WhatEvery1Says corpus. An email will be circulated shortly about this event.