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## Manifesto for the Humanities

Smith, Sidonie Ann

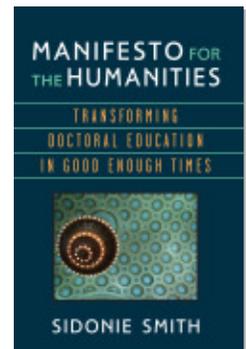
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## Coda

What gains for the labors of transformation!

A 21st-century doctoral education will prepare the next generation of passionate, dedicated scholars willing to engage what has been thought and created and done, in violence and radical renunciation, in the rapture of belief and the cool of disbelief, amid the frenzy of the crowd and the quiet of solitude, in the name of the past and the aspiration of tomorrow. Willing to reanimate the past, observe the present, and project possible futures, by means of profligate curiosity, ardent receptivity, and incisive critique. Willing to reflect on systems of value, in politics and the academy, in aesthetics and material cultures. Willing to upend thought, reflect on thinking, and think, in Elizabeth Grosz's words, "before, beyond, and after the human."<sup>1</sup>

Their scale of inquiry will reach from the singular image to the cloud of Big Data, from the person to the crowd, from the pulsing contemporary, momentous and ephemeral, to the deep time of the Anthropocene. Their curiosity will embrace embodied, psychic, emotional, affective, intellectual, and ideological attachments, of individuals to objects and others, to language and ideas, to other species and the earth. Their fascinations will turn to the capaciousness of storytelling, epic and episodic, raw and highly stylized, fictive and documentary, historical and ethnographic, syncretic and disruptive. They will open themselves for the stories given up in communities or encased in architectural remnants of past civilizations. They will record and analyze stories others tell of themselves, utopian and dystopian, traumatic and ecstatic. They will pause in slow time to register the impact of a word, a metaphor, a phrase, a photograph, a sound; linger in sustained moments of deep reading or listening or viewing; draw pleasure from an abundance of languages and symbolic systems; relish discoveries in archival serendipity. They will poach ideas and theoretical frameworks from across disciplinary boundaries to better understand material worlds and worldviews, their own and those of others across time and geographical expanse. They will forge critiques of fundamental assumptions about the meaning attached to the "the human" and "the humanities."

They will do, that is, the work of the humanities and humanistic social sciences. But they will have come from programs that did not require them to conform to a one-model-fits-all academic program; that encouraged thinking outside the box; that broadened the concept of professionalization away from the one-model-of-success narrative. Some will be adept at navigating digital environments of data, information, content, platform, and code and at communicating their scholarship in multimodal and multimedia forms. Many will be prepared to assess the options of open access. More and more will be adept at working collaboratively and valuing cultures of participatory inquiry, and thus enacting a new ethos of academic sociality. Others will have expanded their range of scholarly voices and idioms of communication. Many will not see teaching as an obstruction to their careers defined solely in terms of publication rate and record; they will have gained sophistication in a range of pedagogical practices. They will be able to explain for diverse audiences that it is not easy to teach humanities courses; that to do so well, faculty must remain active scholars and researchers.

By the time they graduate, they will have been prepared for careers that unfold through diverse trajectories. Some will find exciting careers outside the academy, some careers in the academy as librarians and program administrators. Those who go on to the professoriate will be prepared to pressure colleagues and administrators to adopt more expansive criteria for earning tenure and promotion, and will themselves contribute heterogeneous portfolios for advancement. They will think more capaciously about the venues of humanistic inquiry, and extend scholarly tracks to public footprints and public partnerships. They will recognize that their formidable skills have prepared them for leadership positions of all kinds in the university. They will recognize themselves as part of a larger network of humanists, those in alternative academic careers and doctorally trained professionals outside the academy. They will be prepared to contribute to the long project of changing higher education through critique, innovative initiative, advocacy, and activism, including activism directed at making the climate more inclusive, intervening in the economics of contingency, and diversifying the demographics of the professoriate.

This has been my manifesto, this my vision for the future of the humanities in the academy and the world.

The times, indeed, are good enough.