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**Responsabilidad Social y Compromiso:
Sobre la Ruptura entre Retórica y Realidad**

Social Responsibility and Commitment:
Addressing the Rifts Between Rhetoric and Reality

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[Please note: This informal text, submitted 1 November 2011, is designed for the sole purpose of an oral speech to be delivered by the author in Madrid on 17 November 2011. This text is not intended for publication. Invitation to publish a form of this text should be submitted directly to the author for her consideration.]

Hello. Bonjour. Hola!

Thank you for the generous invitation to speak here today, especially in such an important setting as this cultural site. Of course, because of such grave events as took place in Sarajevo in the 1990s and Iraq more recently I, like you, am very mindful of the precarious nature of national memory and collective identity and their minders. We must then appreciate the conference sponsorship by the Government of Spain's Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the National Library of Spain.

I would like to extend a special set of thanks to the members of the Organizing Committee and the Board, as well as to the various people who have been communicating with me behind the scenes so patiently over recent months (Eugenio López de Quintana, Rosa Martínez Escudero, and Esther del Aguila). I appreciate your time and help very much.

I would also like to acknowledge several colleagues who are here today, two of whom I have never had the chance to meet face-to-face before now, despite years of virtual collegiality (Edgardo Civallero and Pedro López López). Most recently, I had the pleasure of meeting, in person, in Marlia, Brazil, José Antonio Frías, a few of his Spanish colleagues, and of course my dynamic host Marta Lúcia Pomim Valentim. My learning is enriched by these new relationships and encounters.

Ok. In my experience, when I am invited to speak on matters such as social responsibility, it can mean that my invitation is tactical; a strategy put into operation by a person or a group who have been pushing locally for the same things I am invited to discuss as an outsider. Probably the local person(s) has been making noises for some years. I am brought *in* to give attention to their line of thinking with the hopes that other people might listen to me, because of the perception that I am objective. Perhaps that is why I am here today. And I will be honest with you. I accepted the

invitation with this speculation in mind. I acted on the invitation because I care to support the local person(s) who pushes for social responsibility or the amelioration of social problems through library and information work ó here, but frankly anywhere. I also assume that the person(s) may have been out on a limb and so has perhaps paid a price, personal and/or professional, for the act(s) of puncturing complacency. It is often the case.

In an 18 October 2011 article titled "Clampdown on free speech at Salt Lake City Library?" by Derek P. Jense, published in the *The Salt Lake Tribune* newspaper (USA), we learn that:

Salt Lake City Library employees say the latest chapter on staff turmoil is rich with irony: a clampdown on free speech inside the very institution that celebrates the principle. A just-launched crackdown on any opinionated email ó and on criticism of management expressed via social media ó has some veteran librarians fearing for their jobs and a chorus of others crying censorship. Now, for the first time since controversy enveloped Director Beth Elder last year, the library's nonprofit fundraising arm, Friends of the Library, is openly questioning the library's direction and its "chronic problems." In recent days, the past president of the Utah Library Association was placed on administrative leave for challenging new restrictions placed on all-staff email. Another librarian was forced to delete a Facebook post critical of Elder. Others were scolded in private meetings called by Elder's administrative team. And, according to several sources at the award-winning library, supervisors have told staffers they will sift through individual email accounts to look for any proof of insubordination and any criticism of library leadership or its policies. Library spokeswoman Julianne Hancock calls that claim "categorically false." Either way, library employees are plenty worried. "You can't communicate. You're not allowed to dissent," said longtime substitute librarian Lucy Archer, adding that she was warned not to critique the email rule. "Everybody's on pins and needles. But what's interesting is that because of the way they're handling this by trying to gag people, it's making people even more vocal."

The uproar started last week after the human resources manager unveiled new guidelines for all-staff email. It is only appropriate, Shelly Chapman wrote, to send pertinent, work-related information such as available shifts and job announcements. "It was also determined," Chapman wrote, "that employees would not use all-staff email to voice opinions or express concerns." "Appropriate" all-staff email must be reviewed by two staffers before sending, the edict reads. And "any other" all-staff email must be approved by the employee's manager. That prompted veteran librarian Ranae Pierce ó via an all-staff email ó to point out the irony of the rule, given the library's free-speech mission. We hold employees accountable for actions that are directly related to their employment," Hancock said, insisting that the library keeps an "open door to dialogue." "We encourage those employees to bring forth their concerns through the appropriate channels," she added. "But we have no interest in curbing people's freedoms of speech." Since last year, staffers have been on edge over Elder's management shake-up, intended to boost efficiency but also prompting an employee vote of no confidence in the director. Elder's now-annual contract was renewed this spring but comes up for review after year's end. Mark Alvarez, the lone board member who dissented on Elder's renewal, said he is disturbed that management seems to be developing procedures "in reaction to crisis." "Many, many librarians hold themselves out as defenders of the First Amendment. I'm troubled by what I've heard," Alvarez

said. "You don't shut down a communications system to stop dissent. I'm not saying that's happening here, but it might be."

This American newspaper story was not chosen for this speech as a vehicle of sensationalism. Rather, the account begs a case question: to what non-confidential professional and policy matters of public concern might these library employees want to lend their education and experience?

The American Library Association (ALA), the world's oldest and largest library association, includes "social responsibility" in its set of core values and defines it this way: "ALA recognizes its broad social responsibilities. The broad social responsibilities of the American Library Association are defined in terms of the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem; and the willingness of ALA to take a position on current critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service set forth in the position statement."¹ Let us for a moment assume that at least some non-confidential professional and policy matters of public concern entail social responsibility.

On 27 October 2011 another news item came to my attention; a report that "The mission statement of the North Shelby Library [Alabama, USA] indicates it serves anyone who lives and/or works in its service area, but with the passage of the state's new immigration law, that statement may need some tweaking. Since Sept. 1, anyone wishing to get a library card from that repository must show proof that they are legally present in the county."² This reality presented itself in the face of the American Library Association's central rhetoric, the Library Bill of Rights, specifically Article V., which states that "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."³ The news item also bumps up against the American Library Association Resolution in Support of Immigrants' Rights to Free Public Library Access, which asserts that "the American Library Association affirms the right of individuals, regardless of their legal status, to library services."⁴

It is such non sequitur interruptions born in tension that first prompted me several years ago to create "In the News", a course resource for eClass LIS 592 Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in Librarianship at my school. Throughout the academic term, I post a range of media coverage pertaining to our course content to an In the News website embedded within the larger eClass site. Students click on the news items listed to access the full stories (text, video, audio, etc.) The students and I use these real life examples to inform our course discussions.

¹ ALA Policy Manual, 1.1 (Mission, Priority Areas, Goals). Adopted June 29, 2004, by the ALA Council.

² <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/corevaluesstatement/corevalues.cfm#social>

³ http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2011/10/library_card_requires_proof_of.html

⁴ <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/index.cfm>

⁵ <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/ocrpdfofprm/5-2-4-3immigrantsrights.pdf>

What is exceptional about this course material is that it connects the classroom to public life in real-time and with real news. Students learn that breaking news in the real world takes in issues of intellectual freedom and social responsibility in libraries at home and around the world. This is not a class in which students complain that the course material they are expected to learn is irrelevant, artificial, out-of-context, out-of-date, boring or tired. A small sample of topics I posted in winter 2011 follows:

- Suicide Workshop Cancelled at Vancouver Public Library;
- Wikileaks: Libraries and Librarians Respond;
- The Canadian Library Association's Advisory Committee on Intellectual Freedom releases Annual Survey of Challenges to Library Resources and Policies in Canada;
- Librarians Told to Stand on Guard for 2010 [Olympic] Sponsors;
- Libraries in the province of Venice ordered to remove any books by any author who signed a 2004 petition;
- Canadian Library Association Letter January 2011 open letter to the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, concerning the recent cancellation of the screening of the film Iranium;
- Egypt Leaves Internet;
- American Civil Liberties Union & Yale Law challenge high school filtering of LGBT-related sites;
- White power meeting put off in Worcester library;
- Black Americana on display at Blount library creating dialogue;
- Banned books return to shelves in Egypt and Tunisia;
- Gay materials targeted in Oklahoma library bill;
- Idaho Falls Public Library Internet Usage Bill Passes Committee;
- Connecticut Prisons Agency to Review Library Books.

Through our online discussion forums, students: internalize the value of the course objectives; appreciate how constructive educational space allows them to test their arguments, to play devil's advocate, and to role-play different viewpoints; and, identify their own biases, assumptions, and presumptions. An added bonus for me, as teacher, is that I find student participation to be generally high, original, interesting, thoughtful, strong on content, risk-taking, and of high academic integrity; not forced for points. But what is my responsibility ó and yours for that matter ó to the newly minted information professional as they transition out of school into an environment where they do not benefit from the persuasion and consensus building rhetoric akin to, for example, the ALA Resolution on Workplace Speech? Adopted on 26 June 2005, it reads as follows:

WHEREAS, The American Library Association is firmly committed to freedom of expression (Policy 53.1.12); and

WHEREAS, The library is an institution that welcomes and promotes the expression of all points of view; and

WHEREAS, Library staff are uniquely positioned to provide guidance on library policy issues that is informed by their experience and education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That ALA Council amends Policy 54 (Library Personnel Practices) by adding:

54.21 Workplace Speech

Libraries should encourage discussion among library workers, including library administrators, of non-confidential professional and policy matters about the operation of the library and matters of public concern within the framework of applicable laws.⁵

Perhaps more importantly and universally, how do we address the issue (if we agree that is an issue - and that remains to be seen) that persuasion and consensus building bodies such as the American Library Association, the Canadian Library Association and UNESCO have no enforcement authority over library (or in kind) administrations?

If, and more likely when, the new (or experienced) information professional encounters this rift between rhetoric and reality, to what extent can they constructively and effectively negotiate the myriad pressing professional and policy issues with a commitment of social responsibility, both in the best interests of the communities they serve and with regards to their own inside/institutional culture? And so, going back to my teaching example, I must ask (and I have asked myself): is my teaching strong on critical pedagogy or a form of radicalization? I found the answer, at least for me, in the words of Angela Davis: "Radical simply means grasping things at the root."

Another, deeper question emerges: what constitutes library (or archives or documentation or museum work)? That is the enduring dilemma, is it not? For example, what *is* a so-called socially responsible library issue? Literacy? Yes. I think we could agree on that one. That is easy to answer. War? Yes, of course. Because war brings with it propaganda, deliberate destruction of the cultural record (a war crime), misinformation, disinformation, censorship, surveillance, the temporary closings of libraries and archives, not to mention the killings of library and information workers. Poverty? *Is* poverty a library issue? I think so. Do you? Do we? More importantly, if, as in the case of the Salt Lake City Library, staff communications are for business as usual only, then what exactly is *usual* or *normal*? Are strikes or lockouts normal? *Increasingly* normal? And who decides in our volatile times?

The 2005 Library History Seminar, *Libraries in Times of War, Revolution and Social Change* addressed how: "Events such as the pillage and burning of Iraq's National Library in Spring of 2003 have sent cultural shock waves around the world. The apparent contradictions of libraries, traditionally taken to represent stability and continuity, and wars and revolutions, which involve rapid and disruptive change, suggest a number of urgent historical questions."⁶ Topics included:

- Books and libraries as agents of cultural memory to be protected, appropriated or obliterated.

5

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/ifresolutions/Resolution%20on%20Workpl.pdf>

⁶ <http://conferences.lis.illinois.edu/LHS.XI/home.html>

- Library and archival collections and services as instruments of political power in providing, restricting or withholding access to information.
- Libraries and their contents as cultural heritage and as booty.
- Libraries as places of refuge, solace and practical help in times of war, revolution and social disruption.
- The responsibilities of the international community in creating and enforcing policies and procedures for the protection, recovery, and repatriation of cultural artifacts, including books and libraries.

Well, once we can agree on some issue(s) that we believe we can legitimately claim as germane to our work (a very difficult task in itself), a next step involves looping back to the workplace speech problem. How do we engage in social responsibility and commitment *if* we cannot collectively create an ethical space in which to communicate with one another? Perhaps the first imperative action is to openly acknowledge how a lived circumstance of the library and information worker (whether they are a local indigenous storyteller or a state level national librarian or archivist) who punctures complacency is difficult. Perhaps we must put light on that hollow shadowy rift, the precise place where the person who punctures complacency might sit in jeopardy and isolation. Are they looking for a hand to help them out? Will they abandon their profession as a way out? Will our profession abandon them, force them out? Are they possibly standing now, in this real-time moment, in the unemployment lines?

Many library and information workers worldwide spend their daily working lives negotiating intellectual freedom, workplace speech, academic freedom, loyalty oaths, compelled speech, political speech, lobbying, advocacy, and activism ó both in their own institutional culture and more broadly in society. Professional risk depends on the political, legal, economic, ideological, technological and cultural contexts of the countries and communities in which library and information workers live and labour. More personal risk factors depend on their gender, gender identity, class, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, geographical location, language, political philosophy, race or religion. And while we work within the framework of the law, many of us also participate in law reform.

How well do we remember the cultural cleansing that occurred in the Balkans in the early 1990s? Alex Byrne, former Chairman of the IFLA Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, wrote that “For us, the question is the responsibility of librarians and libraries. What is the culpability of those library staff members who were directly involved in the decade long process? It was they who discriminated against their colleagues, they who identified materials for removal and organised their removal and destruction and they who changed catalogue records. Can they claim the Nuremberg defence, that they were “just following orders”? What about those who were aware of the process of cultural cleansing but stood by silently? Most of us were ignorant of those actions, should we have cultivated greater watchfulness? How can we ensure that such a pattern of events will never happen again?”⁷

⁷ Byrne, A. (2002). “Introduction” in *The Ethics of Librarianship: An International Survey*, München: K.G. Saur, p. 11.

The 2011 annual meeting of Latin American and Caribbean library and information science educators in Marilia, Sao Paulo State, Brazil, just last May, focused on social responsibility and information ethics. In April 2012, an International Convention of Slavic Librarians conference, in Sarajevo, will be on the theme "Libraries, Human Rights and Activism". A recent Call for Submissions for a special issue on Archival Education and Human Rights by the editors of *InterActions* (the UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies) states: "In a recent article in *American Archivist*, a group of some two-dozen archival faculty and doctoral students from programs around the world called on archival educators to develop a new educational framework that both reflects and reflects upon pluralist approaches to archival theory and practice. This article added to an ongoing conversation in archival education regarding the ethical imperative of faculty to engage students with culturally sensitive curricula and to promote a social justice agenda in and outside the classroom. At the same time, a growing body of archival studies literature has addressed the intersection of archives and human rights, interrogating the role of records and recordkeeping institutions in both facilitating human rights violations and holding oppressive regimes legally and historically accountable for such violations. This special issue of *InterActions* seeks to bring together these two streams of archival thought in hopes of explicating the role of human rights and social justice in archival education. Moreover, grassroots library workers are presently negotiating library patriotism, creative communism, left web 2.0 and the post-community knowledge activism.

Writer William Gibson, whose most notable work is the 1984 novel *Neuromancer*, asserted: "The future is already here - it's just not very evenly distributed." Let's put this idea to work. For example, what can we understand about basic distribution in Spain? Let us assume that many of you will opt to put our conference theme to the test on November 20 at the election polls, keeping in mind already articulated and/or potential professional social responsibility positions on some of the following matters: unemployment, multilingualism; literacy, education expenditures, poverty, migration, emigration to Spain (e.g. from Romania, Morocco, Bolivia, the UK, and Colombia), government transparency on access to information law and the May 2011 calls from youth such as seen here in Madrid's central square *Puerta de Sol* and the work of *Coalición Pro Acceso*, the Plan of Voluntary Return and its criticisms, the impact of immigration on education (e.g., Comellà's opening of an Educational Welcome Space), ETA, the work of the *Comisión de Libertades e Informática*, Article 20 under the Spanish constitution on the right of academic freedom, net neutrality and how Congress nearly passed "Sinde's Law/Act"

On these counts, we might wish that each of Spain's 13 (more or less) future Ministers of government were in attendance with us. From a social responsibility and commitment position, I personally believe that we can make the case for professional relevance to each and all of their portfolios: Foreign Affairs; Justice; Defense; Interior; Education; Work and Immigration; Industry, Tourism and Trade; Public Works; the Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs; the Presidency; Culture; Health, Social Policy and Equality; Science and Innovation. This assertion is supported by a sense of where our field's footprints have been in this country, for example in: Government; Agribusiness; Graphic arts; Banking and finance; Trade; Construction; Consultancy; Publishing; Education and research; Energy and water; Processing industry;

Information technology; Bookstores; Communication media; Leisure time and culture; Health; Business services; Telecommunications; Transport and communications.⁸

So, perhaps we should ask to what extent our profession has and will have the potential to prepare people to make multi-sector footprints on:

- diversity and inclusion by exploring them in professional relation to multiculturalism, race, ethnicity, class, gender, cultural diversity, the transversal character of cultural rights, globalization, global migration, and universal access to information;
- the affirmation of the dignity of people, regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental capabilities, language, or income;
- addressing service-oriented issues and concerns regarding library and information use by a full range of populations and traditionally underrepresented groups, such as indigenous peoples, cultural minorities, religious groups, migrant workers, women, children, youth, elders, people with human exceptionalities, poor people and people living on fixed income, homeless and street people, veterans, LGBTQ individuals and groups, and people living behind bars;
- advocating diversity and inclusion, tolerance and understanding, and the value of people accessing and enjoying publicly funded library and information services free from any attempt by others to impose values, customs or beliefs.⁹

Of course, such advocacy assumes recognition of how an acceptance of differences can place individual and collective values in conflict, including potentially putting our own institutions in conflict with others. Thus, the push for social responsibility takes us into the complex terrain of information ethics, which runs a gamut of hot topics, including cybernetic pluralism, global tightening of information and border controls, cultures of orality and literacy, digital inclusion, traditional cultural expression, and expressive freedoms in the 21st century.

I know from select cases in North America that colleagues are negotiating threats to academic freedom in an era of NeoMcCarthyism that puts our campuses, on "intellectual lockdown", as noted in *Academic Repression: Reflections from the Academic Industrial Complex*. (Incidentally a book that advocates slow education in line with the slow food movement – education that might realize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's stated goal of true education – intelligence plus character.) If as reported, "The FBI arrested people for wearing the wrong political T-shirts, hanging anti-Bush posters in the dorm room, or reading a provocative book, (56) then what is at play for our library and information studies scholars who work in a context of: contingent work; erosion of tenure (e.g., for clinical faculty and academic librarians); a climate of regulation (e.g., new behaviour codes and respectful workplace policies); cancellation of controversial speakers;

⁸ "Figures on Employability of Spanish Library and Information Science Graduate" by JOSÉ A. MOREIRO (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain) in *Libri*, 2001, vol. 51, pp. 27637.
<http://www.librijournal.org/pdf/2001-1pp27-37.pdf>

⁹ See: <http://www.slis.ualberta.ca/Courses/GraduateCourses/LIS598ServicesforSpecialPops.aspx>

politicized context of tenure cases (e.g. in Israel Palestine studies); insecure flight/air travel for scholars at risk; collaborations, donations, and partnerships with partners without academic freedom; corporate influences (e.g., "Bill Oil Goes to College"); external political pressures (e.g., from government); homogenous institutions and faith tests; expectation of loyalty to administrative leadership, cabinet solidarity, management rights or commitment to a team by administrators; self-censorship and fear of controversy/the chill and intolerance of challenge and critique; custody and control of records (e.g., email); contracting to the cloud; copyright legislation; and, of course, personal animosity.

Let us be mindful of the work of our field's educators, because they are some of the first people who contribute to the teaching and learning of our future generations of leaders (or followers) - some of the first people to carry influence or alienation. Furthermore, to acknowledge and address the contexts in which our field operates (e.g., historical, economic, legal, technological, ideological, political, philosophical, social, cultural) requires understanding of shifts in all levels of education.

According to Pep Molist and Joan Portell, in their analysis of sixteen young readers' collections of universal classics published by Spanish publishers, there are only four in which a title by an author writing in Castilian appeared - the *Leyendas* by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. There are none featuring titles by classic authors in any other of the official languages in Spain. In other words, when a young reader wishes to read the basic canon of young adult's books, they must always first choose the reading of Anglo-Saxon classics (Stevenson, Twain, Dickens, etc.) to the detriment of their own cultures. And this leaves a damaging mark on the reading path of any adolescent. Something similar may be said about younger children's literature in which there are very few intergenerational books that invite the reader to develop a feeling of belonging to a particular environment. This is not something that happens in Germany, with its *Endes and company*, or in France with its *Petit Nicolás*, or in England with Roald Dahl, or in Belgium with its *Tintin*. It seems, however, that little by little voices are being raised to establish the base of reading which shape a sense of a culture of our own. That is why it is very interesting to note the appearance of publishing labels such as Mars, *El jinete azul* or *Kalandraka* that have amongst their objectives the recovery of some of our classics and, likewise, are trying not to remove from their catalogs books in Castilian, Catalan, or Galician which have a right to be read by all generations.¹⁰

Molist and Portell also report that in 20% of schools there is no central library in service, 40% of schools do not have a budget specifically for the library, and 71% of those in charge of the libraries have no formal training (Marchesi y Miret 2005). It is also worth noting the systematic reduction of subsidies for culture and books by administrations during times of crisis when the real research and development of young people relies on their reading abilities. The almost non-existent presence of literary criticism of works for children and young adults in the

¹⁰ Children's Literature and Reading in Spain: A Snapshot. Pep Molist. Joan Portell. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*, Volume 48, Number 3, July 2010, pp. 48-53 (Article) Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/bkb/summary/v048/48.3.molist.html>

general media is another problematic aspect, not to mention the fact that the various platforms which offer electronic books almost systematically neglect children's and young adults' books.

On the subject of librarian "neutrality", American Jesse Hauk Shera warned [already] in a 1935 address to the College and University Section of the American Library Association that: "Today we can ill afford to stand mutely behind our circulation desks, calmly handing out reserved books at the beck and call of an endless stream of students, blandly reaffirming our convictions of our own 'academic detachment.'" We may be rudely awakened some morning with the realization that we are the hapless and unwilling guardians of the propaganda of a fascist regime.¹¹

From my perspective, and one shared by Anthony Worman, my local writing partner on a piece of a national collaborative project titled Digital Labour (DIGILAB) Authors Institutions and the New Media, one can assume a continued leaning in both LIS education and industry towards increasing digital librarianship skill sets. As Worman and I state in an upcoming article for the *Journal of Information, Society and Justice*: "While not everyone has access to technology or is engaged with it to the same extent, a present industrialized model of higher education characterized by excellence and corporatist efficiency both embraces digital culture and drives its development with a capitalist spirit. Not surprisingly, the field of library and information studies/science (LIS), which reflects its broader educational market, participates in this process of disciplinary decadence¹² or fight to struggle and save itself. Digital libraries, digital reference services, digital curation, the replacement of libraries by learning or knowledge commons, bookless "library" spaces, and even library and information studies curriculum delivered by avatars in second life classrooms are now ubiquitous characteristics of digital culture, including campus culture. As many practicing librarians [and other information professionals] now have little choice but to perform digital labour, the shifting nature of this workforce prompts new questions: How is digital labour treated in LIS education? To what extent does the current teaching and learning of librarianship [and sister professions] produce digital labourers and what class of them? Can we see markers in the broader geopolitics of knowledge that might suggest our field is reframing through participation in alternative models of higher education (e.g., Kantian-Humboldtian, decolonial and politico-religious, and politico-economic dewesternizing)?"¹³ We also ask the question: "To what extent is there a possibility for links between LIS education trends and those in related academic disciplines (e.g. education) operating by alternative models of higher education as compared to the reinforcement of the corporate university? For example, to what extent, and how, might digital labour be viewed in a curriculum designed for dewesternization of knowledge, indigenization of knowledge, or Islamization of knowledge?"¹⁴

¹¹ "The college library of the future" in *ALA Bulletin*, Vol. 30 (June 1936), pp. 495-501.

¹² See *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times* by Lewis Gordon.

¹³ Informed by Walter Mignolo's public lecture "Re-claiming the Ethical University and Citizenship Engagement in the 21st Century" at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on 28 October 2011.

¹⁴ In press. Anthony Worman and Toni Samek. "The Digital Labour Shortage: A New Divide in Library and Information Studies Education?" *Journal of Information, Society and Social Justice*. Vol. 4 (2) Decembner 2011.

Along these lines of inquiry, we suggest that themes such as cognitive capitalism, knowledge activism, digital slavery, technological unemployment and "informatization" be considered as foundational topics in LIS education. Because our underlying concern is that to miss consideration of these topics, even unconsciously, might be a silent driver for an LIS education that, borrowing Len Findlay's phrasing from another context and applying it here, "privileges mediation over mobilization of the grassroots; that supports an ignorance economy characterized by anti-intellectual, anti-trade union, and anti-dissent mentalities"¹⁵ [and does make room for the study of groups like Ciber Voluntarios in addition to Fundetec]. What is this future of this kind of teaching and learning given the global politicization of civil society and an emerging political society in a time when the future of the university is now opened up to these movements and their push for epistemic control? Let us recall the words of H.G. Wells: "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe".

Perhaps the essence of social responsibility and commitment is in the practice of auditing our own institutions. Who has fallen into the rift and why? Perhaps we should change the way we think about knowledge. We can think about a reversal of terms. Inspired by scholars like Walter Mignolo, we can unlearn the one-way thinking of working to solve the problems of society. We can learn mutuality. And then we can relearn our field through a process, in part, of inviting society to teach us how to fix problems in our work. In this ethical endeavour, Mignolo would caution that we avoid using social problems to enhance our LIS discipline in the university setting. For example, I can tell you that I did not come to Madrid to put a keynote speech on my curriculum vitae in order to receive praise in a performance review because I am participating in the internationalization of education. I made the trip to learn with you and alongside you. You will see me here for the solid two days.

Those who know my work understand that I maintain a set of key conditions for a socially responsible profession. These include, but are not limited to: legislation that requires professional teacher librarians and well stocked multilingual, multi-format school library collections in our schools; information ethics as a core subject taught to children and young adults in our school systems; an unlearning of information literacy strictly in service of the State and global market fundamentalism (e.g., teaching first and foremost how not to violate copyright); a basic level of workplace speech; and more recently, reforms in academic librarianship that, for example, guarantee the right to teach. I stand by these conditions.

As far as I understand it, and please correct me if am misinformed, only in 1997 was a first National Conference on School Libraries held here. We must then pay attention to documents like the 2005 report "School libraries in Spain: Analysis and Recommendations", which shows some gains.¹⁶

And while there has arguably not been a strong academic LIS tradition in Spain (if it is the case that it was only in 1995 that librarianship/documentation undergraduate degrees became

¹⁵ Len Findlay on academic freedom at the August 2011 meeting of the Canadian Association of University Teachers Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (on which Toni Samek serves).

¹⁶ http://www.fundaciongsr.es/pdfs/bibliotecas_escolares.pdf

recognized as an academic degree in the universities), a strong argument can be made for the benefit of interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary education that sometimes strictly graduate level specializations limit. But whatever the moving target of the faculty or faculties where we locate our field, we should always pay attention to the "environment" in which we house the acts of teaching and learning. Because as academic work unbundles in the 21st century, who practices teaching and who is identified as a teacher is not always clear.

In 2008, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) initiated a landmark case, its first case of academic freedom and academic librarianship in the history of Canadian higher education. Kent Weaver (University of Toronto) and I were selected as the co-investigators. An important aspect of our investigation and related 75 page report centered on the McGill University academic librarians (a cohort of 57 people) right and responsibility *to teach*. Our report included a long and layered set of recommendations, many of which we are now being taken up at McGill University (largely as a result of the conviction of some of the librarians), including new protections for the academic librarians' right to teach.

Beginning with the McGill University case, CAUT has devoted unprecedented attention to academic librarians and librarianship in Canadian higher education. And in real time with this conference in Madrid, there is an event taking place in Toronto titled "Academic Librarianship - A Crisis or an Opportunity? A Symposium". [I was invited to speak on education there on 18 November 2011, but declined as I was previously engaged to be here.] The symposium is depicted as follows: "In response to recent developments in academic libraries in Ontario and elsewhere, academic librarians are invited to gather to discuss the challenges facing the profession of academic librarianship today. This one-day Symposium will serve as an opportunity to hear stakeholders' views of the profession as well as an opportunity for academic librarians to explore ways of re-affirming the legitimacy and the integrity of academic librarianship both now and as we move forward in the future. The Symposium will be organized around three main themes: library education and curriculum, the role of professional associations and the value of professional accreditation, and labour issues such as Faculty Associations and National Labour Associations in Defense of Academic Librarianship."¹⁷ (Note: I have often stated that the school library crisis in Canada has triggered an academic library crisis. If society does not place value on a teacher librarian and a well stocked multilingual and multi-format collection in school libraries, then why would it inherently value the librarian in the academy? The issues are connected.)

Our world is not a quiet one. And as the 100th Anniversary of the Biblioteca Nacional de España is coming up next month, let us share this space, here and now, as an extension of that earlier mentioned desired ethical space where archivists, librarians, documentalists and museologists more fully and freely participate in identifying germane social issues and then negotiate social responsibility and commitment positions about them. For example, is there a centennial concern

¹⁷ <http://utlibrarians.wordpress.com/2011/10/21/register-now-a-symposium-on-academic-librarianship-a-crisis-or-opportunity/>

and concomitant resolution that may emerge at this conference? Granted, it would be hard to pick one. But it would be far too easy to choose one hundred! In the Library of Congress Subject Headings, we now see terms like *waterboarding* (11-13-2007), *hacktivism* (10-6-2010), *biopiracy* (1-7-2008), *extraordinary rendition* (11-7-07), *transgender people* (4-19-2007), *transphobia* (3-4-2008), *assisted dying* [replaced assisted suicide] (7-25-07), *intersex children* (4-19-2007), and *information ethics* (5-16-2007). If it were not for members of our profession who displayed conviction and compassion, these terms would not be there. *Armenian genocide* would not be a subject heading. "Armenian conflict" would prevail. As our Canadian literary icon wrote: "A word after a word after a word is power." (She also "joined the fight against a consultant's proposed cuts to Toronto's library system, marshalling her 225,200 Twitter followers and crashing a server hosting a petition."¹⁸) And there I stop.

Thank you. Merci. Gracias!

Author's Note: I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the intellectual stimulation prompted by students and guest lecturers in the UAlberta graduate elective course LIS Services to Special Populations in fall 2010 and fall 2011. The open and engaging class discussions are notably memorable, instructive and constructive and have often come to mind in the making of this speech.

¹⁸ <http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1028941--margaret-atwood-fights-library-cuts-crashes-petition-server>