**Maker or Assassin: The Charred Aura of the Re-made**

**Proposal for Contribution to *Making Humanities Matter***

**David N. Wright**

**Douglas College**

The proposed contribution to *Making Humanities Matter* confronts the following question: if we are attempting to revive erased spaces by re-fabricating them, what responsibility do we have to the corpse's social, political, economic, and cultural aura? How do we consider, integrate or confront an individual—or collective—emotional affect produced by the revival of the previously erased or inert?

Broken into two inter-related parts, the contribution first deals with the materials used in humanities fabrication by asking how the reproduction of erased spaces (loosely defined)—obsolete objects, eroded circuitry, destroyed geographic features, demolished buildings, lost / stolen artifacts—is infiltrated upon by the "plasticity" of its fabrication. By re-producing erased objects using materials sometimes not even present in the original contexts, our fabrication creates a distorted sense of materiality. In short, how do we—or can we—account for the fabrication of materiality as it is manifest through an individual or collective expectation? Does making in the humanities revive, in a tactile format, something that has not been quite erased? While the original contexts and cross-references may no longer exist, the memories, experiences, and cultural signatures do—how do researchers seek to incorporate those things inside the tactile reproduction?

Building on this primary intervention, the contribution will move to discuss what happens when the individual or collective reaction to the materiality of once-erased spaces intercedes upon the intended outcomes, rendering any knowledge creation or production inert. While we may be able to fabricate erased objects, we do not yet have a foundation for understanding and predicting the triggers—cultural, social, economic—the reproduction of those models may elicit. We may be guilty, in our zeal for re-deploying humanities practice in technological contexts, of "fabricating" connections between materiality and memory, unduly activating difficult emotional reactions that are not accounted for in the value proposition for re-making erased spaces, which is often about re-establishing erased truths and representing lost heritage. What the fabrication of erased spaces, as a form of technologically-based humanities practice, might show us is that these spaces are not artifacts in a tactile or material sense, but rather are symbolic of a set of emotional, cultural, and economic realities that individuals and collectives may not be equipped to process. As we fabricate, or re-fabricate, assemblages of once-erased cultural spaces, what exactly are we activating in the social space and how might we account for the “fixed” truth fabricated by the machine?