digital humanities in my own critical work, such as "'Some New Pleasures'? Donne's Lyrics and Recent Critical Approaches," forthcoming in the *John Donne Journal* (vol. 35, 2016).

While Kopec's essay generalizes too broadly about many types of criticism, it also skirts movements that might compromise his theses. In particular, how about the role of close reading in deconstruction?

But given the intelligence and scope this article so often displays, continuing to list disagreements is less valuable than asking why it goes wrong where it does. Might this question lead us to challenge the privileging of overly bold theses and the whole role of teleology when we write—and are written by—the history of our profession?

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Reply:

I appreciate Heather Dubrow's thoughtful response to my essay "The Digital Humanities, Inc.: Literary Criticism and the Fate of a Profession," which finds in the digital humanities and new formalisms competing objects of professional desire. Dubrow objects to what she sees as several important flaws in my article, including its "idealized" portrait of postindustrial flexibility, its distorted genealogy of the new formalism, and its overly bold style. A few potential lines of response to these charges come to mind: the irony of the fact that I'm writing this letter at home on a laptop while my two small children play in the background (#ScholarSunday); my essay's attempt to link an explicit economic polemic to the present without endorsing the "cultural politics" that most, if not all, formalists denounce; the corporatization of the university recently made concrete for me when my home institution, under the rubric of "strategic alignment," eliminated majors in women's studies, philosophy, French, and German; and the identification of "critical university studies" as the site of boldness in our era of "new modesty" (Jeffrey J. Williams; "The New Modesty in Literary Criticism"; *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 5 Jan. 2015, www.chronicle.com/article/The-New-Modesty-in-Literary/150993/). In this short reply, though, I would like to respond to the concern that seems most pressing to Dubrow—that the "dichotomy between data and literature . . . is undercut by" recent digital scholarship.

In fact, studies like the one by Jonathan Hope and Michael Witmore to which Dubrow alludes reinforce, rather than undercut, my claim about the dialectical opposition between data and literature. In considering the convergence of digital humanities and formalist disciplinary constructs, my essay concludes with Ryan Cordell's work on Nathaniel Hawthorne, "'Taken Possession Of': The Reprinting and Reauthorship of Hawthorne's 'Celestial Railroad' in the Antebellum Religious Press" (*Digital Humanities Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2013, www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000144/000144.html). Although I did not make this argument in my essay, it struck me as I was writing it that the conflict between data and literature had not been resolved insofar as Cordell's fine scholarship appears in an issue of *Digital Humanities Quarterly* (a special issue on "the literary") rather than in a mainstream literary-studies journal. Cordell's subsequent publication in a venue like *American Literary History* ("Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers"; *American Literary History*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2015, pp. 417–45), of course, does bridge the traditional and the digital. So too does the issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly* that contains Hope and Witmore's article, a special issue titled *Shakespeare and New Media*, which I was unfamiliar with before reading Dubrow's letter. And yet, as of October 2016, these crossover successes strike me as exceptions that prove the rule. In her introduction to the same issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Katherine Rowe offers a well-theorized account of the digital and its

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applicability to Shakespeare studies ("From the Editor: Gentle Numbers"; *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 3, 2010, pp. iii–viii). "With a few exceptions," she admits, "traditional humanities journals seldom review online resources" (iv). Her admission leads me to read the publication of Hope and Witmore's "iterative reading" as a moment of dialectical stasis "wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation" (Walter Benjamin; *The Arcades Project*; Harvard UP, 1999, p. 462). That Rowe welcomes a new constellation in scholarship that will "redress this lack" is perhaps more a sign of what is to come than a sign of what has been or, for that matter, of the now.

If the scholarship of Cordell, the contributors to the special issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and Dubrow portend the normalization of digital humanities scholarship in mainstream literary studies, I too welcome more of these exchanges between the literary and the digital. Essential here, however, is to maintain a healthy tension between the digital and the humanities by bringing "our historiographic skills to bear on our digital tools" (Rowe iv). This reflexive attitude toward the tools of analysis is a hallmark of critical inquiry, an impulse made ever urgent by our embeddedness in institutions that appear to be pervaded by a neoliberal, end-of-history teleology. It therefore seems not overly bold to imagine an alternative to the synthesis, welcomed by Dubrow, in which the digital diminishes the humanities and data displace literature. The techne of formalism opposes such dimishment and displacement. There are signs, like the recent publication of a special issue of *Modern Language Quarterly* titled *Scale and Value: New and Digital Approaches to Literary History* (vol. 77, no. 3, Sept. 2016) and the open-access book series Debates in the Digital Humanities (dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/), that the techne of the digital humanities will too.

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