Introduction

Humanities, Always Already in Transformation? Network for the European Humanities in the Twenty-First Century

Rosi Braidotti, Hiltraud Casper-Hehne, Marjan Ivković and Daan F. Oostveen

Two Perspectives on the Present-day State of the Humanities

The fact that humanities are today going through some form of self-scrutiny, or even crisis, is not in itself new for a field that has historically developed into the arts of self-questioning and investigative reason, but these processes are gaining speed and momentum in the present context. This volume starts from the assumption that the humanities today are in a process of transformation in order to meet the challenges they are facing. These fall into three broad categories: first, the staggering technological advancements marked by the convergence of the life sciences, the neural sciences, artificial intelligence, nanotechnologies, and information technology. Second, the social and economic fallout of these changes, in terms of unequal distribution of wealth and access to technologies, economic polarisation and austerity measures, but also commodification, marketisation, and the monetarisation of knowledge, including in academic settings. And third, the climate crisis and the toll that both these advanced technologies and the extractive economies that support them are taking on the living environment and the lives of multiple species.

Even accounting adequately for these contradictions and challenges of our times is a critical task in itself, one which needs all the analytical skills and the interdisciplinary methods of the contemporary humanities.

There are, we would argue, two principal ways of understanding this context with its multiple challenges and the current predicament of the humanities, and this volume reflects both approaches. The first, dominant one tends to see the humanities as a relatively stable and self-contained realm of scholarly and intellectual enquiry, based on a set of disciplines anchored in millennia of history and consolidated institutional structures. Their common denominator is that their value cannot be measured in terms of instrumental usefulness, but is strictly not for profit, gratuitous and for the love of the world. On this account, the challenges that the humanities are today confronted with are seen as *extrinsic* – they come from the domain of societal 'instrumentality' and are contingent – being linked to contemporary and hence mutable historical conditions that have not yet passed the test of time. This self-assured response is an attempt to come to terms with the need for material self-reproduction of society, for efficiency, standardisation, and calculability. It is, in other words, a process of adaptation to changing conditions within negotiable limits, as exemplified by processes such as commodification of academic output and digitalisation of publications and teaching material. In this perspective, the main task for the humanities is to transform themselves in such a way as to 'adapt' to these processes

– or 'resist' them when strictly necessary – without compromising their non-instrumental, humanist core. In other words, commitment to the present is qualified by respect for the canonised past.

This understanding of the core of the humanities is supported within this dominant perspective by positive qualities such as the disinterested quest for truth, 'substantive' as opposed to instrumental rationality, the concern with meaning rather than merely descriptive understanding of reality or personal opinions, objective arguments and verification of truths as opposed to unfounded statements and the fulfilment of the fundamental human need for creative self-actualisation in the respect for others. Humanities are not necessarily seen as self-referential within this diagnosis – indeed, their 'value' for other dimensions of social reality, above all democratic politics, is often accentuated, but this value is essentially of a supportive and defensive nature. In other words, humanities contribute to a defence of objectivity, truth, critical thinking, and democratic values from the onslaught of corrosive instrumental rationality and the vagaries of personal opinions and ignorant or ill-informed claims to truth. Rarely does one encounter in such accounts the supposition that the task of the humanities is to interrogate the very categories that constitute them, so as to investigate their continuing relevance. Thus, conceptions of critical thinking and democratic values can be investigated *simultaneously* with the task of critically examining the processes, concepts and ideas that are perceived as threatening them. Equally important is to examine the supposed boundaries separating the domains of tradition and innovation, canon and critique, past and the contemporary, often set up in an antagonistic opposition that may not do justice to their respective complexities. Within this perspective the humanities are often called upon to 'open themselves up' to new technologies or novel demands coming from economic and technological domains, or to the pressure of social groups clamouring for justice and recognition. But the very notion of 'opening-up' is often fashioned in terms of a static and unchangeable entity – the humanities – deigning to open itself up to forces of societal progress for better – in forms of techno-optimism – or for worse, in some sort of 'adaptive' transformation of conservative values.

The second, perhaps less popular, view of the present-day predicament of the humanities understands their transformation as an *intrinsic* phenomenon, caused primarily by processes taking place within the humanities themselves. These are largely independent of the ongoing social, economic, and technological transformations – and are therefore not really agents of disruption or crisis, but rather a continuous process of self-overcoming by the humanities themselves. Given that this self-scrutiny is constitutive of the humanities as a field, it follows its own temporality and methods. As a result, on this account, the reason why the humanities struggle to keep up with the disruptive consequences of societal transformations, such as the double acceleration of advanced technologies on the one hand and even more advanced environmental degradation on the other, is not a defect, fault or lack on their part. Contrary to what their detractors and critics say, the reason why the latter have had some success in marginalising the humanities in contemporary science funding is not due to the fact that the humanities are failing to 'adapt' to changing historical circumstances. Nor are they overprotecting their centuries-old humanist 'core' in a static manner. On the contrary, their delay is due to the fact that they are not 'overcoming themselves' fast enough, through the process of their own *self-reflection*. In other words, the process of the humanities' critical interrogation and elaboration of their very core premises and conceptions requires a specific time span and mechanisms of both introspection and analysis that need to be re-elaborated.

Within this perspective, the primary catalyst for the humanities' self-overcoming lies not only in the external – although undoubtedly real – challenges they face, nor in an exclusively 'internal' process of self-introspection, but rather in a new relational deal between these two dimensions. The relational, dialogical, porous structure of the humanities as a critical tool of orientation in the world rests on what might be termed the productive 'surplus' of their own foundations. That is the core of curiosity, the inbuilt normative sensitivity and inherent creative experimentality of the humanities as expressing the capacity and the will to think gratuitously about our being in the world. This can also be described as their 'substantive' rationality, their power in the sense of *potential*; that is to say, an ontological propensity to empower human beings' ability to grow, endure, and prosper together. Viewed from this angle, the humanities are not primarily concerned with quantitative issues of efficiency, standardisation, calculability or material self-reproduction. What matters is rather the qualitative dimension, which constantly pushes the humanities to interrogate their own basic premises, in a permanent state of Socratic suspension, so to speak. In our times, one returning question concerns the very status of the human, amidst the intersecting accelerations of technological evolution on the one hand, and environmental devolution on the other. Many chapters in this book question, for example, whether the figure of the 'human' that stands implicitly at the core of the humanities is actually coherent. Does it cover Anthropos, Homo sapiens, a generic or universalist humanity? Does it refer to a specific humanist vision of 'man'? Might these definitions not be too narrow or exclusive? How credible and fair is their claim to universal, trans-contextual meaning and relevance or all humans in all places at all times? If all these claims cannot be substantiated with enough rigour, what are the terms by which the humanities may engage in a process of self-transformation in order to meet these challenges?

This volume remains genuinely open to a range of different answers to these questions, but it overall tends to take this second, minoritarian view of the present condition of the humanities. We aim to document, explore, and further solidify the process of the current evolution of the humanities, driven by their own productive self-reflection in relation and response to changing historical conditions. We argue further that these changes are already taking place in manifold ways around the globe and are even accelerating. It is this active logic of the dynamic and relational self-transformation of the humanities, rather than any reactive vision of their 'adaptation' or 'resistance' to external challenges, that best ensures the undiminished strength and relevance of the humanities in the twenty-first century.

Towards What Kind of 'New Humanities'?

When we focus our attention on the world of contemporary education and academia, the primary arenas in which the humanities operate, we may observe that the humanities are facing a number of persistent institutional challenges. These can be seen as the effects of the overarching societal processes of transformation, with the multiple technological innovations being matched by ecological devastation. This means that the ambitions of technology-driven capital to realign all available resources and to blur all the boundaries between nations, institutions, disciplines, locations and species that were set in the social context of the 'Fordist', post-Second World War era, are checked by the speedy deterioration of the material environment that was expected to support us humans forever. We are running out of the idea that 'nature' is an endless reservoir of primary material for our consumption. By extension, the foundational distinction between an inert 'nature'

awaiting human intervention and a dynamic 'culture' that puts the humans in charge of the development/exploitation of natural resources no longer holds true. The implications of this conceptual shift for the institutional practice of the humanities are far-reaching.

Let us look at the organisation of the field to start with. At a time when so much scientific research is taking place outside the university world, in private or corporate, professional and activist surroundings, the academic community in the humanities has had to make extra efforts to keep up its research profile. This has taken both quantitative and qualitative forms. No area of scientific or scholarly endeavour today is immune from the threats, challenges and opportunities which emerge from the dynamic interaction between the scholarly capital accumulated in the past and the new forms of knowledge production of today. The contemporary university has attempted to strike a balance between the forces of tradition and those of innovation in an increasingly globalised research world. This university structure has given high priority to a double aim, which is not without its internal contradictions.

On the one hand, the contemporary university aspires to monitor and propel the advances in science and technology, although – or maybe because – they displace the centrality of the human as Anthropos, Homo sapiens, or just 'Man' as defined in the past. On the other, most university humanities in Europe today aim to defend a humanistic education based on the Enlightenment principle of fulfilling the transformative and progressive potential of scholarly learning. The academic humanities today have accordingly cultivated a high level of social awareness in responding to the demands made on the university by the labour market and the corporate world, while remaining loyal to their century-old mission of pursuing scientific excellence for its own sake. That is quite a balancing act.

Central to this quest for a new balance between conflicting demands is a belief system that is both epistemic and ethical, namely the belief that higher education in the humanities aims to cultivate the highest possible degree of excellence in all citizens and across all disciplines. This includes advanced critical skills in thinking and in criticism, moral and aesthetic values as well as more technical academic skills. Recent discussions about the new alliance between traditional – disciplinary – and new, mostly interdisciplinary forms of knowledge have addressed these issues. Many thinkers have called for a productive realignment of the humanities with research and scientific education, in a sort of redefinition of the terms of interaction between the 'two cultures' of the humanities and the sciences, including a number of contributors to this volume (see, e.g., Chapters 2, 14, 17, 19, 20 and 21). Others are moving in the direction of an alliance across the 'three cultures' of the humanities, social sciences and life sciences. Moreover, there is a cross-border consensus that the humanities continue to produce their own specific forms of scholarship, methodology, and knowledge, which offer significant and original angles of reflection upon the different scholarly traditions and disciplinary domains.

This volume assumes a high degree of social responsibility in the humanities, and it explores the ways in which contemporary scholars in the humanities stand as citizens in a polity which understands that socially relevant research, technologically applicable research, across all fields requires the pursuit of excellence. Excellence contains intrinsically the notion of social relevance and aims to apply it practically. Scientific research in the humanities can therefore be defined as the activity which combines the rigour of disciplinary methods and conventions with openness to societal challenges and the multiplicity of stakeholders they entail. Humanities combine reason with the respect for diversity, the flair for dialogue with other sciences and a basic commitment to human

solidarity, ethical decency and functional citizenship. The disciplines and scholarly fields in the humanities have a long tradition of combining these values, with a keen eye to the criticism of patterns of systemic exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation. Speaking truth to power is part and parcel of the capital of knowledge produced by the humanities in their century-long institutional history.

This approach entails the following consequences: first, resistance to the reduction of university research in general, and in the humanities in particular, to the level of a provider of intellectual commodities in the contemporary, ever more quantified culture. This in turn assumes that the scholars are not just 'content providers' and hence consumers of cultural products. Nor are they 'knowledge brokers' and mediators between interested investors. They are first and foremost free agents acting in accordance with the established tradition of academic freedom, with a critical mind and open disposition. They are citizens or aspiring citizens in the service of scholarly and scientific activities and education.

Second, the approach entails the conviction that the discussion about excellence needs to be open and comparative and include social relevance and outreach as essential components. Critical work is needed to discuss the paradigms at work in the making of notions and practices of excellence in contemporary science and scholarly research. This discussion requires an interdisciplinary approach and a dialogue among different disciplines from the humanities, the social sciences, but also the natural and exact sciences. The need has emerged to question the persistence of any mono-paradigmatic approach to science and to the assessment and evaluation of scientific results and output. Moreover, a more open comparative approach tries to combine respect for the past paradigms with a receptive attitude to contemporary developments, following the balancing act we analysed above.

Third, there is the need to intensify and to a certain extent systematise reflection on the role that advanced technologies have played in shaping the research world of the third millennium. The necessity to develop adequate means and analytical tools to assess the digital aspects of the world of research points in the direction of a new interdisciplinary area of study that could be called the posthumanities, including areas such as 'humanistic informatics', 'digital humanities', or 'computational humanities'.

Fourth, these technological advances have been met with equally disruptive developments in the ecological balance of our planet. This convergence points to the necessity to elaborate critical tools to assess the environmental crisis and the climate change emergency. Transposed into the field of research in the humanities, these aspects of the current predicament point in the direction of new interdisciplinary areas of study that call themselves 'Environmental humanities', or 'Green Humanities'.

How to assess these very recent developments in the discursive and institutional structure of the contemporary humanities is an urgent question, which is discussed in several chapters of this book. The debate about these new developments needs to be tied in very closely to the mission and the social responsibility of the university as the training ground for discerning citizenship and responsible scholarship. The adaptability of the humanities to changing contexts and circumstances has been amply documented throughout history. Humanities-backed education has traditionally, since the thirteenth century, focused on the written word and yet the humanities prospered after the invention of printing and the decline of Latin as the *lingua franca*, and they thrived after the inclusion of modern European languages in the university curriculum. In more recent times, the humanities survived the inclusion of visual images – cinema and television, as well as music and modern theatre – into the higher education curriculum. The next hurdle is the digital revolution, but as recent scholarship in the humanities shows – and many chapters in this

book testify to this – it is our contemporary task to ensure that the humanities do well out of the digital era, and all evidence points to a fruitful and creative new alliance between technology and literature, algorithms and linguistic signs, science, and the humanities.

Next, the emphasis on the international dimension of education and research today needs to be reassessed in the light of changing geopolitical relations. Both within the new European Union and in the globalised world, the university community needs to compare its century-old tradition of controlled – and often exclusive – cosmopolitanism to the realities of the global flows of technologically mediated capital today. The future of the humanities in Europe is intrinsically connected to the framework for development and the potential for success of the project of the European Union. This is still a work in progress, which is currently being reframed by shifting power relations in the global sphere. In elaborating the international dimension of the humanities in Europe today, it is crucial to scrutinise the manifold ways in which the global impacts on the local and vice versa.

The European dimension merges with the civic level of implication of the humanities in the making of Western liberal democracies. Because the humanities constitute the historical and conceptual core of the European University, and of the cities that historically house them and have grown alongside them, it is important to rethink the relationship between the academic and the civic. By extension, this means that we must define contemporary academic humanities scholarship today in terms of the quest for a balance between research and policies, the scholars and the citizens, the symbolic capital of the humanities tradition, and the challenging elements of disruptive innovation in the present. The scenario facing scientific research today is a leap forward towards unpredicted social scenarios, not one of 'back to the future' in a static respect of past glories. Our academic past deserves more than to be monumentalised in a static manner. The emphasis has to fall on the creation of new active roles for humanities scholars today, in ways that invite reflection on what it means to conduct research in the humanities in an era that has displaced the centrality of humans through the combined impact of advanced technological developments and accelerating climate change crises. Scientific research today – in the humanities as in all other fields – can only profit by cultivating the responsible citizen within the researcher, the dreamer within the scholar, the progressive ethical agent inside the professor. Higher education is as critical as it is creative: it is an encouragement to dare, to take risks, to try out new paradigms, methods, and models. Humanities research invests not only in investigative reason, but also in the power of the imagination defined as the activator of internal acts of transformation and external acts of peaceful disobedience. The ultimate aim of the pursuit of scholarly excellence in the humanities today is to work towards the creation of social and scientific horizons of hope, vision, and creativity.

The Double Imperative of the Humanities' Self-transformation

One of the paths of development of the new humanities today has been dubbed as 'posthumanities' (Wolfe 2010). The 'post' in the posthumanities points to the transformative task that the humanities are facing today and that constitutes one central concern of this volume, namely to examine what could possibly come after the traditional understanding of both the human and the humanist heritage in the contemporary humanities. The critical line, which we defined earlier as 'minoritarian', consists in redefining and expanding the humanities' core mission and foundations, namely their conceptions of humanity and the human actor – including the categories that are excluded from or only partially included in this definition. And related to – but also discrete from it – comes the ques-

tion of the relevance of the humanistic legacy in today's world. This task can further be defined in terms of two main *imperatives*. The concept of 'humanity' as an allegedly universal category that has provided for centuries the basis for the humanities' positive self-understanding, as the corpus of disciplines that reflect the totality of human experience, has over the past decades come under serious critical scrutiny. This critique has unfolded in two interrelated senses, which result in a double exposure: first, in the sense of exposing a constitutional incompleteness within this category of humanity, that is to say its manifold exclusions and reductions on the one hand; and, second, in terms of its rigidity, that is to say of its reliance on a logic of multiple binary oppositions that paradoxically ends up producing a homogenised pattern of dichotomous entities.

The first critical line of the humanities' self-interrogation in this respect uncovers the multiple exclusions and reductions at work within the traditional, 'Enlightenment' understanding of humanity that has underpinned humanistic disciplines in modernity. That is the overarching idea of the one human model that becomes a normative idea, endowed with its flawed kind of 'universalism'. That spurious universalist model – which in fact is Western and Eurocentric – is the hypostatisation of the very specific and particular perspectives of this cultural region, which then passes itself off as universal. In a critical perspective, the normative idea of the human – in an unqualified universalist mode – implies the exclusion of whole categories of humans from the status of full subjectivity. We are not all human in the same way, nor to the same extent, and the differences in degrees of belonging to full humanities are predicated in terms of class, gender and sexuality, race, ethnicity, and religion. The contemporary humanities consequently expose and challenge the homogenisation and standardisation of the idea of humanity and the human experience, as well as reductive approaches to human self-understanding and self-actualisation.

The second dimension of the humanities' self-questioning relates to the assessment of the legacy of humanism and of the binary logic of opposition and exclusion that sustains it. In contemporary social reality an appeal to a supposedly inclusive and tolerant *humanism* that underpins much of the present-day 'defence' of humanities, in the face of the double threat of technological challenges and ecological extinction, needs to be qualified by further critical supplements. The 'humanist' defence of the humanities as a *sui generis* realm of intellectual enquiry that cannot be subjected to the logic of instrumental usefulness or profitability, however well-meaning, often functions as the flip side or even the supplement of its 'adversary' – the technocratic revolution of the past several decades and its neoliberal economics. This is due to the fact that such a line of defence follows the terms in which the problem was posed in the first place, namely as a dichotomy of instrumental versus gratuitous or substantive reason. It does not question the terms of this problem, nor does it redefine the goal away from mere adaptation to technology, into an attempt to overturn the new societal and technological developments into opportunities for intervention, resignification, and redefinition. The boundaries between the academic and the profitable need to be redefined, so as to make an impact on social reality in the sense of value production, expansion of potentialities for agency and subject formation and for consciousness-raising of social actors to previously unnoticed forms of injustice, exclusion and suffering.

The multidimensional self-reflection of the humanities propelled by these imperatives sets the basic coordinates of this volume, which attempts to interweave the reflective and critical dimensions over the course of its five sections. The book aims to simultaneously explore and present ways in which the humanities are (always) already responding to the double imperatives of making explicit the terms of their engagement with their own

historicity, the conditions of possibility of any universalistic claim, and ways to supersede and overcome the binary logics of defining terms by dialectical opposition and negativity. The volume also tries to set an agenda for the humanities today and provide some orientation as to the further work that needs to be done in this respect. The multiple dimensions of the humanities' self-reflection intersect with each other and move on in a multi-directional manner, without possible synthesis. We may well long for a more inclusive and heterogeneous notion of 'humanity', one that de-centres anthropocentrism and expands our understanding of humanism, agency, emancipation, and political subjectivity, but much more work is needed before we can actually provide a convincing one. Analogously, it is urgent to undermine the binary logic that opposes instrumental reason and its capital-oriented profits – standardisation, marketability, 'contribution to society' – to the creative self-externalisation of an allegedly universal human spirit which leads to curiosity-driven research, disinterested intellectual enquiry, blue sky thinking, artistic production and experimentation. The humanities today need to collaborate with other scientific domains to demonstrate how the new advancements in the realm of science and technology can be repurposed for the sake of new forms of creative self-understanding, collaborative ethics and participatory democracy. All lines of enquiry point in the same direction: how to expand our understanding of what changes about the current status of the human, and how to meaningfully redefine the function of the humanities in the third millennium.

The Question of Method

The discussion about what methodology is best suited to the subtlety and complexity of the humanities has been ongoing for decades and it is not our aim in this volume to reconstruct this debate in detail. The volume has adopted a number of distinct but often overlapping methodologies to deal with the tasks. It is fundamentally a collaborative team effort that has been nurtured by regular seminars and discussions among the researchers. The methods deployed are: collaborative authorship; qualitative research methods; interviews; databases; focus groups; analyses of publications; and study of websites. Moreover, the volume includes one 'synoptic' chapter (Chapter 3) which analyses short reflections on the present state of the humanities by researchers from all over Europe, from different academic and research institutions, as well as by representatives of international organisations devoted to the humanities.

Methodologically speaking, the contributors argue first of all that the humanities are no longer to be viewed only as a series of institutionalised academic disciplines, but as a unique way of addressing and understanding human experience in all its heterogeneous manifestations.

Scholars in the humanities are confronted by a real challenge in that they not only have to argue for the continuing relevance of academic subjects like literature, history, philosophy, art, drama, and so forth, but they have to address the question of how we can guarantee sufficiently consistent higher education in all these fields, and how this can have an impact on the university knowledge system as a whole.

Second, the question about the place of the humanities in the education system has led us to the need to rethink the overall structure and basic principles of the field. This means that the volume, as a whole, often addresses abstract ideas and may even occasionally adopt a general tone. We should make it clear that this generic approach does not express a lack of empirical grounding and hence of precision, but rather the fact that any specific

disciplinary problems we face in the humanities today engage with and mobilise general structures and rules of play that are at work in the global higher education system as a whole. Changing just one part of this integrated system signals the start of changing the overall structure as well.

Third, and as a consequence of the above, we found that despite the differences in local political, cultural, economic and other contexts, the higher education systems around Europe appear to be far more similar to each other than we had expected, including in terms of the problems they face and of the solutions being tested. These similarities emerged gradually as the different contributions started coming in and it is confirmed as one reads the volume throughout. This speaks to us of a system that, despite being institutionally heterogeneous, nationally and linguistically diverse and economically very unequal, nonetheless pertains today to a global system. This means that changes, reorganisations, and new managerial structures spread very quickly and have an immediate effect on the specific ways in which the global templates are applied in each particular European cultural and national context.

This collection of multidisciplinary pieces explores these issues through contributions arranged in five interrelated thematic parts. While the contributions differ both in terms of methodological approaches and positionality, they all intersect and dialogue with one another in terms of the overall aims stated above. It is our hope that they also mutually reinforce each other in their shared attempt to diagnose and expand the self-understanding of the humanities against the background of what we consider to be their *intrinsic* motor. That is not so much a crisis, but a self-generating force, which we consider the strength of this field, namely its constant need for productive self-transformation and targeted interrogations, which ultimately ensures their enduring relevance. We would dare to define the undiminished and even increasing role of the humanities as lucid and well-informed navigational tools, catalysts of social change and means of solace and support in times of crisis. This is why the structure of this book is such that it reflects but also interweaves the main imperatives that drive the humanities' continuing efforts at self-reflection and transformation. Those drivers include the quest for generic principles and a shared understanding of the conditions of our historicity – the challenges and opportunities of our era – and thus display a universalist tendency. But they also respect the specificity and grounding of each instance of the humanities, of their disciplinary practices and traditions.

Introduction to the Structure of the Volume

Part I: The Humanities in Action: **Topics and Methods** introduces readers to the complex disciplinary and methodological landscape of contemporary humanities through three broad perspectives on the present state of the humanities, the proliferation of new forms of humanities research and the ever-greater intertwinement of various disciplines in the form of inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching.

Chapter 1, 'On the Emergence and Convergence of the New Transversal Humanities', opens the volume with a comprehensive account of the institutional emergences and convergences of the 'new humanities'. Rosi Braidotti and Daan Oostveen argue strongly in favour of humanities overcoming their traditional association with 'humanism' and anthropocentrism. The authors point out that the novel domains of humanities pertain to a 'posthuman' orientation, which engages with issues of societal relevance that expand the field of activity of 'the human' into non-human elements, entities and actors (both natural or organic and technological or inorganic). The authors use an empirical mixed-methods

analysis based on interviews and surveys to investigate the rise of programmes, curricula, centres and institutes in new fields of enquiry, which are known, for instance, as the Environmental Humanities; Digital Humanities, Medical Humanities, Bio-Humanities, Neural or Cognitive Humanities; Geo or Earth Humanities; Public or Global Humanities; and other such 'new' humanities. As these new areas of research emerge from a range of interdisciplinary academic areas and enjoy considerable support from the corporate sector, Braidotti and Oostveen argue that these fields of posthuman scholarship, by combining the critical assessment of humanism with a critical analysis of anthropocentrism, revive and enrich the work of the contemporary humanities. The authors argue that, far from being a crisis, this set of circumstances and historical constellations offers productive conditions to renew the profile, the identity and the function of the humanities in a globally linked, ethnically diverse and technologically mediated world.

In Chapter 2, 'Shaping the Integration of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research', Bianca Vienni-Baptista, Isabel Fletcher, Jack Spaapen, Doireann Wallace and Jane Ohlmeyer consider the challenges of improving pathways to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research (IDR/TDR) integration for the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS). They draw on results from the Horizon 2020 collaborative research project SHAPE-ID: Shaping Interdisciplinary Practices in Europe. The authors argue that while research policy makers at European and national levels have for many years promoted the need for AHSS perspectives in research addressing societal challenges that are often led by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) researchers, in practice the effects of this interest have been rather modest. The chapter is informed by an extensive systematic review of both academic and policy literatures and a comparative analysis of these findings with selected case studies from a survey among European interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research projects. In their conclusions, the authors review the factors that promote or hinder AHSS integration in IDR/TDR and explore pathways to improve such integration.

In Chapter 3, 'Synergies Between Humanities, Science and Technology: A Transformative Understanding of the Humanities in the Twenty-First Century', David Bueno, Josep Casanovas, Marina Garcés and Josep Vilalta observe that in our societies broadly, but especially in higher education systems around the world, there has been an increasing concern for the perception of the usefulness of humanities in the last decade, and this concern often takes the shape of two extreme positions: 'catastrophic' or 'protectionist'. This decrease in the perceived value of humanities has been fostered by a culture that promotes competition and economic benefit – however, as the authors point out, our societies and our planet are experiencing profound changes and distortions such as climate change, new technological developments, political crises, global health challenges, and social and cultural transformations. These changes, transformations, challenges and crises, the authors argue, demand new conceptions of humanity and the human experience which have to be reflected in higher education systems. Therefore, the debate is not about how many hours or how many departments should cover humanistic issues, but about how we should promote a certain attitude in relation to knowledge that enables mutually enriching bridges and relations to be built between science, technology, and humanities. For the authors, the humanities must necessarily play their part as both drivers and critics within the framework of these transformations. Finally, they identify three main types of changes: (1) those related to environmental and climate issues; (2) those connected to the scientific advances and technological developments; and (3) those associated with cultural and social aspects.

Part II: Humanities, Democracy and Civic Responsibility explores the potential of contemporary humanities for contributing to a robust democratic culture of civic participation and the overcoming of challenges that present-day democracies face, especially the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic (some of these issues are further discussed in Part IV, which deals with Public Humanities). Three different investigations – of the relationship between the university and the city, humanities in 'post-corona' times and the phenomenon of public humanities – converge around a common project. That is the notion that, for the humanities to fully realise their considerable potential to strengthen democracy and provide new symbolic resources to people, to fight challenges such as the pandemic or populism, they need to revise and correct the classical 'missionary model'. That model assumes that the academic scholars know better and that it is their moral duty to step out into the public sphere and enlighten the citizenry with their superior knowledge. This missionary model is built with reference to a universalist and rather Eurocentric idea of universal values and truths. This chapter argues that a novel, horizontal, non-paternalistic and more collaborative approach is needed instead, which goes beyond the exceptionalist vision of the humanities scholars as the prototype of the Man of Reason.

Moving in this direction, Chapter 4, 'The University and the City' by Antonino Rotolo and Cristina Gamberi, aims to investigate how humanities can contribute to understanding the city from the specific angle of its relation to the university, here understood as a material and immaterial site of knowledge and values production. Recognising that the university's 'living values' have been shaping the urban mindset and space, the authors analyse, interrogate, but also comment on good practices that creatively engage with the role that the university can play within, and more importantly, *with* the city in building a discourse that prioritises issues such as inclusion, equity, sustainability, circular and mutual economics, environment, health and cultural heritage, among many others. The chapter focuses in particular on two case studies that can be seen as paradigmatic for demonstrating the complex relation between the university and the urban space and the new challenges that they are both facing. The first example of good practice is represented by the Fondazione per l'Innovazione Urbana – Foundation for Urban Innovation (FIU), which is a legal entity founded jointly by the City of Bologna and the University of Bologna. The second is ROCK, a European project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna. This includes the University of Bologna along with other universities and focuses on historic city centres as extraordinary laboratories to demonstrate how cultural heritage can be a unique and powerful engine of regeneration, sustainable development and economic growth for the whole city.

In Chapter 5, 'Humanities in Post-Corona Times: Challenges and Opportunities', Hiltraud Casper-Hehne and Christina Henkel argue that humanities can contribute significantly to progressive social change, for which a potential space has been opened through the pandemic. However, they believe that the humanities themselves need to engage with society in novel and creative ways to achieve this. The text focuses on the challenges and opportunities that arise with and through COVID-19 for the humanities, and on the question of why it is relevant to engage with different societal actors, their predictions and proposed solutions. They also stress the need to actively participate in core debates on values, recommended actions and prioritisations in the course of societal action. The authors' focus is on questions of communication: the discourses and actors of the so-called first and second 'waves' of the pandemic are taken up in order to show the current and future use of the humanities. Casper-Hehne and Henkel argue that, through

the pandemic, differences become visible both intra- and interculturally, although the virus makes everyone the same, no matter which language, which religion, which system dominates. While all share the same goal of overcoming the pandemic, strategies differ, and numbers alone cannot legitimise political action. A humanities perspective, according to the authors, is essential to make social developments, political actions and the communication of scientific knowledge transparently visible to social actors. The humanities represent a power for action in that they carry a specific mindset for understanding, knowledge transfer and the communicative shaping of lifeworlds. Their social responsibility lies primarily in the transparent communication of knowledge and thus in the promotion of democratic legitimation of social and global transformations.

Taking its cue from these arguments by Casper-Hehne and Henkel, Chapter 6, 'Public Humanities Today: Between Community Engagement and Social Critique', explores the most fruitful contemporary strategies for humanities 'going public'. The aim of the authors, Marjan Ivković and Đurđa Trajković, is to understand what Public Humanities are and how they are articulated and practised around the world today. The authors argue that Public Humanities are neither a concept nor a discipline but rather a phenomenon. The chapter approaches Public Humanities from various angles: the authors look into how Public Humanities came to be, what were the infrastructural conditions of their emergence and reflections on their meaning. Two principal strands of Public Humanities that have crystallised over the last several decades are analysed. The first is the 'community engagement' model, which evolved in the United States through the attempts to overcome the already mentioned 'missionary' conception of Public Humanities. The second is the 'social critique' model which has mostly evolved in Europe, and which builds on the community engagement model by integrating its democratic and horizontal spirit with a greater reliance on 'expert' resources in the humanities (social and political theory, for example) for the purpose of addressing some burning societal issues. In their conclusion, the authors offer some critical reflections on how Public Humanities can further flourish and contribute to progressive social change in a context of general uncertainty created by the pandemic.

Part III: Intercultural Perspectives and Changing Patterns in The New Humanities combines four accounts of the transformations that humanities have been undergoing in the past decades. Each chapter explores how the humanities can enhance our capacity to understand, imagine, experience and analyse the nature and character of how we live well with others. This part focuses on a series of new *relationalities* around which new concepts are forming, and yet these concepts do not necessarily have purchase with people or communities outside academia. This raises questions of the ethics of knowledge production and the role of the humanities as a set of academic practices in fostering new ways of experiencing, imagining and living. It focuses our attention on the risks we might run by not using the humanities and all the resources they bring to enhance human understanding and flourishing. The major challenge here is our changed relation to the environment very broadly understood, not just to the natural resources of the planet, but to all the different others with whom we co-exist.

In Chapter 7, 'Intercultural Humanities: What They Are and What They Can Do', Casper-Hehne and Henkel return with some nuanced reflections on the present potentials of the humanities and in particular those of the Intercultural Humanities. The contribution is an attempt to understand and recognise some of the forces that have influenced the current situation of the humanities and to make visible which developments have brought about the Intercultural Humanities. Central to the humanities with an intercultural per-

spective is the focus on cooperation: research *with* instead of research *about*. Furthermore, the authors argue that it is not crises, but the ability to transform, among other things through its connectivity, that is one of the potentials of the humanities. It is also a positive example for other sciences, and not only in higher education, where interculturality is an applicable and versatile concept, but more broadly. In the authors' perspective, interculturality is a cognitive process that emerges from the actors' self-reflexivity and experience of cultural plurality. It contributes to overcome ethnocentrism by enabling the researchers, through interaction and polylogue, to anticipate the other's perspective. It also affects one's own construction of reality and one's own actions/research and teaching. The authors analyse exemplary transformations in this respect, which they trace genealogically, using three short examples from the departments of Intercultural German Studies, Intercultural Philosophy and Intercultural Theology. They argue that interculturality, in its institutionalised form and not only implicitly present, has a valuable influence both in research and education and in global society.

Chapter 8 by Henrietta Moore and Juan Manuel Moreno, 'Changing Patterns of Self-Other Interaction in the Contemporary World', probes the conventional boundaries of the term 'humanities'. The authors use an exploratory case study analysis to study how different forms of artistic performances, aesthetic productions and academic-community collaborations can help us navigate the uncertainties of the contemporary moment. As Moore and Moreno argue, within the uncertainties of the contemporary moment brought forth by globalisation, technological change and automation, climate emergency and mass displacement, deep systemic racism and rising inequalities, and now the global COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need for rethinking and reimagining our approach to the humanities, and our relationship to knowledge. As the authors put it, 'we believe that now, more than ever, the focus should not be so much on the form (epistemologies, ontologies) or the public value (measurement, and impact) of arts and humanities, but in how their many knowledges, practices and performances – from the academic to the activist, the individual and the collective, from the traditional to the emergent – help us create and cultivate different forms of engagement and relations based on care; with ourselves and with others – humans, non-humans'. The authors argue that these knowledges, practices and performances should not be approached or understood as mere spaces or tools of practice or enactment to engage with and 'solve' a set of problems. Instead, they stress that 'we ought to experience and inhabit them as locally situated moments, attitudes that offer us opportunities *to care* about how we think and relate to our world(s) in relation to ourselves and beyond ourselves . . . now, in the present moment'.

Chapter 9, 'Post- and Decolonial Perspectives on the Humanities Curriculum', complements the above analyses by arguing for expanding the narrow North American concept of postcolonial studies in humanities to encompass a variety of other experiences and perspectives. Relying on Nghi Ha, the author, Tanja Reiffenrath, argues that a particular strength of postcolonial theory rests with the discursive spaces it opens for dissonant voices and positions in an effort to undermine 'constricting discursive structures and academic hierarchies' and move beyond 'canonisation, ideological fixations and hegemonic knowledge production'. In looking beyond the North American discourses of Postcolonial Studies, Reiffenrath aims at bringing to the foreground the theoretical pathways we already have within our Western, European humanities to confront the historical effects of our colonial legacies enshrined in our institutions and knowledge traditions. Taking the concepts of 'curriculum' and 'null curriculum' as a point of departure, the chapter probes the discursive function of (1) the marginal (if any) place of European colonial

history in curricula and public discourse and (2) the North American postcolonial/race agendas.

Finally, in Chapter 10, 'Digital and Posthuman Narratives in Literature', Cristina Gamberi provides an exploration of the ethical and moral implications of the mutations of 'cultural industries' and forms of 'transmediality' by analysing Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) as an exemplary case of children's literature that has generated a great variety of transmedia narratives whereby humanities can investigate our cultural orientations towards the future. According to Gamberi, the complex and multilayered status of *The Diary* within the global culture can contribute towards a new ethical territory where the humanities converge with digital technologies and the politics of the form. By investigating the Western notion of childhood not as a neutral status but one which is an idealised trope which frames our sense of posterity and embodies aspects of political nature that have profound educational and ethical implications, Gamberi interprets children's narratives as one of the privileged sites from where to disclose and critically rethink what can be counted as human and the role of the humanities. For Gamberi, the key questions in the transmedia production of knowledge are what literature means for children both in terms of 'education' and as 'nurturing of imagination', and how this is changing through digitisation. The author touches on the notion of children as not-yet-fully-human and, as such, excluded from the knowledge production process.

Part IV: The New Humanities is the largest component of the book, with four subsections that thematise several of the already mentioned new domains of research and societal engagement of the humanities. They aim to provide a comprehensive account of their state today and the prospects for their further development.

The first subsection is devoted to Public Humanities and expands upon the insights from Part II insofar as the contributions aim to show that the methodologies and knowledge proposed by the Public Humanities often represent a symptom of the problem rather than its solution, since the translation and transmission of knowledge within these methodologies lack the practice of critical thinking and judgement that are seen by the contributors as fundamental to practising informed decisions and democratic citizenship.

In Chapter 11, 'Towards Critical Public Humanities', Ivković and Trajković continue their line of enquiry from Chapter 6 as they investigate the potential of the humanities to contribute to the articulation of nuanced forms of social critique, 'those that uncover the subtler forms of obstruction of public debate and democratic popular sovereignty'. Ivković and Trajković examine three initiatives that have made productive use of the humanities in articulating social critique in the contemporary ex-Yugoslav space: the *Women in Black* and *Women's Court* collective activist initiatives from Belgrade, an interdisciplinary project *Figuring out the Enemy* conducted from 2014–16 and dealing with Serbian-Albanian relations, and the alternative Belgrade-based cultural institution *Center for Cultural Decontamination*. The authors explore the possibilities and limitations of these initiatives as transformational, critically scrutinising their different practices of deconstructing the omnipresent hegemonic/dialectical divides within the nationalist discourses of legitimation of the post-Yugoslav states. As Ivković and Trajković put it, 'these initiatives are exemplary forms of humanities-informed social critique which target types of social domination (obstruction of public debate and social exclusion) that are not specific to the ex-Yugoslav transitional context but are evolving on a global scale'. The kind of cultural hegemony order that took shape in transitional societies such as Serbia over the past three decades, the authors argue, anticipated the contemporary antagonism of 'right-wing populism' and 'radical centrism' that has been crystallising in much of Europe and

North America, and the logics of critique that the authors identify in the three Balkan initiatives as representatives of the 'social critique' model of Public Humanities are also applicable to this global emerging hegemonic order.

Chapter 12, 'Transmedia Science Fiction and New Social Imaginaries', develops an innovative argument about the capacity of science fiction which has become 'transmedial' to foster the development of new social imaginaries. Raffaella Baccolini, Giuliana Benvenuti, Chiara Elefante and Rita Monticelli show that new social imaginaries are emerging through transmedia science fiction and social engagement. According to the authors, one of the crucial aspects of the so-called 'digital revolution' of the last decades is undoubtedly an impressive mutation of communication forms and modes of cultural circulation and consumption. Within this context, culture thus becomes a 'network of re-shapings, re-creations, quotations, repetitions, and transcoding of artefacts where the usual and disused separation between different media opens up reflections that imply interdependency rather than comparison'. Focusing on the case study of the *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (1985), Baccolini, Benvenuti, Elefante and Monticelli investigate how the media revolution, in its diverse forms and applications, affects gender equality and equity but also how the very notion of gender is re-discussed and transmitted. Within the authors' perspective, the very notion of identity and subjectivity, politics of the body, memory and solidarity as political tools, are open to further epistemological investigations, and transmedial science fiction can be a powerful catalyst of such investigations.

In Chapter 13, 'European Archaeological Research at the Dawn of the Third Millennium', Luiz Oosterbeek shows the capacity of archaeology to inform important contemporary public debates, as he traces two distinct paths along which archaeology has evolved over the course of the twentieth century. The author explains that the 'various disciplines' strand of archaeology evolved towards resuming the strong interdisciplinary scope of archaeology's origins, sharing the move towards the cross-fertilisation of scientific fields and humanistic concerns (new formalisation approaches, cognitive archaeology or the resuming of global interpretative synthesis illustrate this trend), while the 'archaeology as a discipline' strand became primarily focused on contextual descriptions, moving closer to the social sciences and having a primarily multidisciplinary, less integrated scope. The chapter reviews these trends and major new evidence and understandings of the human past in Europe and beyond and the attempts within contemporary archaeology to embrace social sciences concerns (e.g., gender, inequality or landscape management).

Within the Digital Humanities second subsection, the contributions study the impact of the Digital Humanities from epistemological, ethical, legal and cultural perspectives and analyse the two-dimensional impact of the digitalisation of knowledge by questioning this process in two main intertwined directions: What are the ethical and cultural implications of our information age? And how is digitalisation reshaping the social responsibility of knowledge, considering the changing relations between the university as the location of academic and scientific excellence and its civic environment?

Caroline Sporleder and Franziska Pannach approach the theme of Digital Humanities in Chapter 14, 'Humanities in a Digital World', through a predominantly data-driven and quantitative approach using EU funding initiatives FP7 and Horizon2020 to examine and map out which European countries and regions are the main drivers of Digital Humanities and which countries are under-represented in terms of EU funding allocation. Sporleder and Pannach not only showcase specific Digital Humanities activities and projects that highlight aspects of collaboration and Digital Humanities research, they also examine in detail some of the wider problems in Digital Humanities and its subdisciplines, e.g.,

the under-representation of certain languages in natural language processing, as well as challenges relating to funding, reusability and applicability which leads the authors to identify certain desiderata and policy recommendations. As the authors argue, while Digital Humanities do not exist to rescue small or under-funded disciplines, they do have the chance to create visibility of smaller disciplines and foster intercultural and interdisciplinary research. However, in order to foster true and meaningful research collaborations, the Digital Humanities field itself must first take a long hard look at its own community and become less white, male, Western and less 'canon' itself. Only then, the authors argue, can Digital Humanities create an impact on the traditional humanities, and truly deserve to belong to the 'new humanities'. Sporleder and Pannach stress that 'the responsibility of the Digital Humanities also involves stepping up to face challenges in online communication, e.g., in the fight against hate speech'.

In Chapter 15, 'Artificial Intelligence and New Paradigms for Human Decision Making. Towards a New Idea of Humanity?', Antonino Rotolo proposes, from a predominantly legal and ethical perspective, that the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) systems raises several important questions for the humanities: How can a humanistic approach to AI make an epistemological, ethical, legal and cultural impact in our contemporary world? Is AI designed according to a new idea of humanity? What kind of impact can AI have on traditional humanistic issues and the humanities understood as a field of knowledge? The author is particularly concerned with the question of whether AI transforms and reshapes the idea of humanity itself. Rotolo examines these questions through a study of interrelated issues within the digital humanities, including autonomy, awareness, personhood, and (human-machine) communication, responsibility, and the relationship between AI and literature.

Environmental Humanities is the third important branch of the new humanities that we have already encountered in Chapter 1 – and the third subsection brings together two comprehensive overviews of this fast-developing and multifaceted current. In Chapter 16, Steven Hartman, Serpil Oppermann and Marco Armiero give a thorough introduction to environmental humanities in 'The Environmental Humanities: European Perspectives on How a Field is Addressing Twenty-First-Century Global Challenges'. The authors explain that this burgeoning field can be seen as a 'cornucopia of disciplines, theories and approaches concerned with all matters environmental', and they put forward the argument that direct social and political engagement is intrinsic to this field. Hartman et al. point out that Environmental Humanities have evolved as an interdisciplinary field, less as a result of programmatic efforts than as a form of 'drift' of the humanities towards the issues related to the widely perceived crises of social-ecological precarity in the present century. Relying on Noel Castree's metaphor of Environmental Humanities as a 'house with many rooms' that keeps evolving, the authors choose to reflect on three of the most prominent 'rooms', namely environmental justice, material ecocriticism, and integrated Environmental Humanities. Environmental justice goes beyond mere critique of environmental devastation and strives to achieve a transformed human relationship to the Earth based on genuine sustainability – the crucial methods employed to this end are 'narrative justice' and the analysis of 'toxic narratives' which structure the capitalist social reality. Material ecocriticism is an ambitious innovative form of ontology that draws on authors such as Bruno Latour, Karen Barad, and Donna Haraway, and it treats all forms of matter (biotic and abiotic) as agentic or 'storied', capable of co-producing the 'ongoing Earthly tale' through the constant entanglement of human and non-human agency. Finally, integrated Environmental Humanities have evolved in recent years as a project that brings

together high-impact international actors in sustainability science, education, civil society and the spheres of cultural policy and engagement with smaller regional and territorial stakeholders on the front lines of social and environmental change.

In Chapter 17, 'Feminist Posthumanities: Redefining and Expanding Humanities' Foundations', Cecilia Åsberg and Rosi Braidotti argue that the efficacy of the Environmental Humanities, a by-now established field of research with many integrated disciplinary inputs and interdisciplinary outlets, will depend on its ability to address the 'radical ecologies' that are emerging. If the Environmental Humanities are to form a sustained field, the authors point out, they need to meet up with contemporary problems and gaps created or left by other modes and configurations of knowledge. Most importantly, they need to deal with the 'human' of the humanities, with the very understanding of who gets included or excluded in the very normative ideals around the Anthropos of the Anthropocene. Key here, the authors argue, is a focus on relationality, on the embodiment and environing of subjectivity – the sense of self and community that we gain or lose in relation to new radical ecologies. Åsberg and Braidotti explore a few of these radical ecologies: already in the somewhat environmentally protected Nordic region radical ecologies are emerging – for instance, in relation to contemporary waste management and increased CO_2 emissions, the authors find climate youth activism; alongside the depletion of soils and oceanic environments, they find artistic acts of resistance, and, finally, they address the role of feminist activism in academia. All these are radical ecologies of multispecies death and slow violence but also of vibrant life and new community-building.

The last subsection of Part IV is devoted to the Medical Humanities, a strand of the new humanities that definitely assumes centre stage today in the context of the global pandemic. The section opens with Braidotti and Oostveen's second collaboration, Chapter 18, on 'Medical Humanities: Concepts, Practices and Perspectives', which elaborates their earlier analysis. Braidotti and Oostveen aim at giving a broad overview of the rise, history and organisation of the Medical Humanities and argue that, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, the question of the intersection or convergence between medicine and the humanities has become increasingly important. The authors show that the Medical Humanities move beyond bioethics to develop an interdisciplinary field that studies the impact of genomics, synthetic biology, stem cell research, but also the neural sciences, not only on medical practice, but also on society as a whole. The Medical Humanities, as Braidotti and Oostveen explain, are involved with the transformation of the human and non-human on the cellular, molecular, viral, and genetic levels. This goes beyond mere humanistic questions regarding the human individual and health – Medical Humanities criticise what it means to be 'alive', to be 'human', to be 'essential' for a nurse or social worker. They exist at the intersection of medicine (broadly defined), humanistic enquiry, and humanistic expression, which could mean using the tools for analysing a poem or reading a novel in order to enable a 'translation' between humanities and medical sciences. The Medical Humanities therefore emerge as a confluence of scientific and literary thinking.

Chapter 19 by Mariacarla Gadebusch Bondio, 'Medical Humanities With and Beyond Bioethics: Disciplinary Diversification in Medicine Facing the Complexity of the Bio-Cultural Corporeality', delves deeper into the controversies surrounding this complex emerging area of humanities research regarding its boundaries, themes and intersections with other forms of research. The chapter outlines and critically examines the establishment of Medical Humanities in an international comparison, focusing on the tension between disciplinary identities on the one hand and interdisciplinary tasks on the other,

which has led to the development of strategies that have proposed different solutions in the various academic realities. On the basis of some concrete examples, Gadebusch Bondio explains phases of upheaval and forms of institutionalisation (founding, merging, splitting of specialist societies or journals) of Medical Humanities. The author's analysis relies on three perspectives: disciplinary diversification in medicine facing the complexity of the bio-cultural corporeality; mapping of the field of disciplines and the common field; and a focus on cross-disciplinarity, interconnectedness and critique. The author finally focuses on medicine itself – the academic embedding and the research field of Medical Humanities – noticing in particular one fruitful tension that provides an opportunity for Medical Humanities. Given that epistemologists and philosophers of medicine have begun to question the basic pillars of medicine such as evidence, and since the uncertainties of pandemic conditions animate the trading zone between science (medicine) and society, the potential of disciplines in the in-between is growing. Their opportunity could be to contribute to the diversification of evidence by questioning the complexity and fragility of the 'One Health' approach that is now recognised in medicine.

And such nuanced questioning of the 'One Health' perspective in Medical Humanities is precisely what Chapter 20, 'From Single Human Disease to a Holistic One Health Approach' by Hélène Verheije and Arjan Stegeman, undertakes to do. Verheije and Stegeman observe that, while medical sciences pushed forward during the COVID-19 outbreak with the rapid development of viral detection tests and anti-viral vaccines, the discussions and resulting dichotomy based on the beliefs about whether or not medical sciences can, will and/or need to save humanity from future (infectious) diseases became stronger and stronger. The authors therefore rely on a perspective which looks at the future of humanity with respect to viral threats, and they focus on one particular approach to this issue, namely the standpoint of One Health, the scientific concept that human, non-human and planetary health are interconnected. This is followed by a critical analysis of the current actors in the One Health field and the contribution of technological versus natural approaches. The authors argue that humanities as a discipline now has a crucial role in informing the public within the debate on the role of science and technology in solving current and future health threats. In addition, the humanities can and should raise the questions needed in order to build a healthy and sustainable future, based on the interaction humans have with each other, but also with animals and the planet. The authors finally argue for a 'holistic' One Health approach, since 'we are all in this together', in spite of the multiple differences that characterise us.

The final section of the book, **Part V: The Humanities as a Building Block for Future Sciences**, rounds off the volume's analysis of the present state of the humanities by looking closely at the challenges and opportunities that humanities in general face within the academic and political institutional realities of today.

This comprehensive analysis is complemented in Chapter 21, 'In the Shadows of a Pandemic: Humanities in European Research and Innovation', by Jan Palmowski's research of the support given to the arts, humanities and social sciences through EU funding. Palmowski's analysis shows, contrary to some commonplace 'catastrophic' diagnoses, that, amidst a growing focus on innovation and applied research in successive EU framework programmes, the social sciences, arts and humanities have actually enjoyed resilient support from the European Research Council and the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions, and humanities have also received significant support from the small but important funds provided by the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) initiative. Furthermore, as Palmowski argues, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised many new ques-

tions for researchers in the humanities and social sciences around the societal, cultural and economic dimensions of public health and the disruptions to it – locally and globally, past and present – and has reinforced fundamental research perspectives that were apparent before. Indeed, Palmowski points out that even in the early days of the pandemic, researchers in the humanities and the social sciences have demonstrated the disruptive impact of the pandemic (and thus of public health more generally) on gender relations (at work and in the private sphere), on how we work, how we communicate, and on the changing types of work needed. The pandemic has also caused fundamental cultural shifts in how the arts are consumed, how communities are formed and how they dissipate, and in the role of science in political debate, and, finally, it has reinforced the urgency of addressing the changing nature of democracy, whilst increasing the opportunity cost of not addressing other concerns such as the impact of technological change on human health and well-being.

In Chapter 22, 'Humanities for Science/Policy for Humanities', Gabi Lombardo, the Director of the EASSH, argues that a coordinated effort from the humanities to work with social and natural sciences disciplines is of paramount importance to ensure that the ideas and insights from this research can systematically inform the politics of tomorrow. Reading like a true manifesto, Lombardo's chapter argues that in order to achieve this crucial aim, research must be well funded and national governments must commit to support the long-term sustainability of disciplines and allow for the emergence of new multi-dimensional scientific approaches and methods. Only by influencing a change in the way nations finance research, Lombardo argues, can we ensure fair access to our disciplines and make visible the ideas and insights from art, the humanities and the social sciences that allow policy makers to proceed 'from management by crisis to management by foresight'.

The author stresses that with an investment of public and private funding reaching over US$1.7 trillion, the 'game' of research funding has become highly sophisticated and complex, and the implication of such a science policy approach is that the research agenda is increasingly dictated by the biggest spending countries that drive the financing of global research areas that are gradually converging. The European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH) was born in this important time, where diversity of research contributions is crucial and, more importantly, as Lombardo stresses, EASSH was born from the belief that the social sciences and humanities research play a key role in the circulation of ideas, which is instrumental in informing and supporting policies and decision making.

Chapter 23, 'Where Next for the Humanities? Perspectives from Across Europe', is unique insofar as, rather than presenting a single line of argument, Juan Moreno and Henrietta Moore bring together a variety of perspectives of a number of external contributors. These are distinguished humanities scholars from across Europe who outline their views on the present state of the humanities in the time of COVID-19. The external contributors were invited by the editors to comment on the topics, methods and perspectives, as well as the institutional structures surrounding this question. The aim of this chapter is to include a broad and interdisciplinary range of voices on the role of the humanities within contemporary society. A second goal is to reflect on the opportunities and challenges of the plurality of approaches in the humanities to research and knowledge production, methodologies, communication, and impact. And, last but not least, they all make recommendations for the development of the humanities in the twenty-first century.

Purposefully avoiding specific disciplinary demarcations, and searching to highlight points of convergence and disruption, Moreno and Moore analyse the contributions in a

synthetic fashion, identifying five 'emerging and evolving themes' within them that address the role and relevance of the humanities in the contemporary world: Imagination and Aesthetics; Building Bridges; Ethics of Knowledge Production; Complex Temporalities; and Navigating Tensions. Moreno and Moore point out that the purpose of these contributions and the synopsis in this chapter is not a defence of the humanities. Instead, they seek to make a clear distinction between, on the one hand, what the humanities can do and already do, and, on the other hand, why they are important in terms of the opportunities and challenges of our contemporary moment. They are especially keen to set a research agenda that emerges from within the field of the humanities itself.

Reference

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