Humanities Forward Conference Programme

May 13-14th, Ertegun House, University of Oxford

SATURDAY (May 13th)

09.30 – 10.00	Registration and Coffee

10.00 – 10.30 **Opening Address: Prof. Helen Small (Merton College, University of Oxford)**

10.40 – 12.25 **Session 1 - Institutions and Researchers: Key Issues**
Chair: Paul Lawrence (Open-Oxford-Cambridge AHRC DTP Director)

Humanities Research Seen from a European Network Perspective

Wojciech Sowa and Charles Giry-Deloison (Chair and Vice-Chair of HERA)

Collaboration and Community in the Future of Humanities Research

Thomas Nelson (Wolfson College, University of Oxford)

Investing in the Young

Stephanie Oade (Classics teacher and Head of *Quadrivium*, Oundle School)

12.25 – 13.45 Lunch break

13.45 – 15.00 **Session 2 - Philosophy and Frameworks: New Perspectives and Approaches**
Chair: TBD

The Knowledge to Love

Sarah Thomas (Independent Scholar)

India and the Global Future of the Humanities

Alex Kostova (University of Sofia)

15.00 – 15.20 Tea break

15.20 – 16.35 **Session 3 – Computational Methods: STEM, Languages, Humanities**
Chair: Barbara Gillivray (King's College London)

Syennesis to Aristotle, 2400 Years on: The Implications of the Machine Learning Revolution in Medicine for the Future of Humanities Research

Jenny Vo-Phamhi (Columbia University) and Katherine Benjamin (University of Oxford)

The Future Is Collaborative: Historical Psychology in Latin Texts

Jennifer Devereaux (Harvard University), Mohammad Atari (Harvard University), Joseph Dexter (Harvard University), Pramit Chaudhuri (University of Texas at Austin), and Patrick Burns (NYU)

16.35 – 17.00	Tea break

17.00 – 18.30   **Special Panel: The Past, Present, and Future of Historical Linguistics**
                   Chair: Michele Bianconi (Wolfson College, University of Oxford)

Marina Benedetti (President of the Società Italiana di Glottologia)

Susan Fitzmaurice (President of the Philological Society)

Daniel Kölligan (President of the Indogermanische Gesellschaft)

18.30   Dinner for speakers and chairs

SUNDAY (May 14th)

09.30 – 10.00   Registration and Coffee

10.00 – 11.15   **Session 4 – Wellbeing: Myself and Others**
                   Chair: Stephan Nitu (Lincoln College, University of Oxford)

The Case for Delight in the Humanities: a View from Te Whanganui-a-Tara

Frazer MacDiarmid (Te Arawhiti—The Office of Maori Crown Relations, Aotearoa New Zealand)

Thoughtful Interdisciplinary Thinking – The Future Is Now

Tomás Lally (University of Galway)

11.15 – 11.40   Tea break

11.40 – 12.55   **Session 5 – Enter the Digital Realm**
                   Chair: Elleke Boehmer (Wolfson College, University of Oxford)

Literature Pedagogy in the Digitalized Classroom: Observations from Hong Kong

Flora Ka Yu Mak (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Shiny Things and How to Make Them Work

Lena Zlock (University of Oxford)

12.55 – 14.10   Lunch break

| 14.10 – 15.25 | **Session 6 – Applied Humanities: Skills and Environment** |
| | Chair: Lynn McAlpine (Department of Education, University of Oxford) |

Talking About Trees: The Paradox of the Environmental Humanities

Conor Brennan (Trinity College Dublin)

Towards Reinvigorating Human Inquiry and Critique, and Enervating the Emphasis on 'Skills': Transdisciplinary Research as a Mechanism for Demonstrating the Value of the Humanities

Lindsay Nickels (University of Cincinnati)

| 15.25 – 15.50 | Tea break |

| 15.50 – 16.35 | **Session 7 – Humanities in the Real World: an Example from Classics** |
| | Chair: Arlene Holmes-Henderson (Durham University) |

The Irene Project: *Classical Literature for the Promotion of Peace and Reconciliation in the Classroom*

Rafael Uribe Neira (Otto-von-Guericke University) and Ronald Forero Álvarez (University of La Sabana)

| 16.35 – 17.00 | Tea break |

| 17.00 – 18.00 | **Humanities Forward Roundtable** |

Dan Grimley (Merton College, University of Oxford)

Gervase Rosser (St. Catherine College, University of Oxford)

Elleke Boehmer (Wolfson College, University of Oxford)

Arlene Holmes-Henderson (Durham University)

Emily Troscianko (Pembroke College and TORCH, University of Oxford)

| 18.00 | **Concluding Remarks: Prof. Dan Grimley (Head of Humanities)** |

Paper Abstracts

Humanities Research Seen from a European Network Perspective
Wojciech Sowa and Charles Giry-Deloison (Chair and Vice-Chair of HERA)

This contribution would like to address two current interrelated issues stemming from the tensions, experienced by the academic communities, between "freedom" of research and imposed research policies, at national, European and international levels: 1) that of the autonomy of the humanities, not only as a specific field of research in its own right with its wide range of disciplines, but also in respect of its underlying societal dimension, and 2) that of the tensions between top down and bottom up research, that is to say the autonomy of humanities research seen from the researchers' viewpoint and perspective. It is very difficult to propose some general solution or conclusion as much depends on policies on which researchers have little say, but we hope that this contribution will lead to a discussion on the future of the humanities.

These topics are embedded in the many changes that have affected humanities research over the past years: the emergence of new themes or fields of research - the most obvious being the digital humanities (and the digitalization of humanities) success story - the emphasis (bordering on obsession) put on transdisciplinarity (sometimes *versus* interdisciplinarity, though without a clear definition of these concepts on which all agree), the alignment on a "hard" or "experimental" sciences model, the increasing place taken up by what are termed stakeholders (museums, associations, NGOs, etc.), the pressure put on including citizen involvement and, of course, public engagement and, more recently, artificial intelligence. These changes affect, to varying degrees, the whole process of research, from choosing a subject to publishing the findings, and also the methodology(ies) used. Not only humanities research is not done in the same way it was 40 or 50 years ago (an evolution shared by all fields of research) but there has also been a clear shift towards a more "utilitarian" objective assigned to it, with the underlying expectation of a financial and societal "return on investment". This is particularly apparent in the different funding programmes launched by the European Commission since 2002: Framework Programmes 6 (2002-2006) and 7 (2007-2013), Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) and Horizon Europe (2021-2027), in which basic research has slowly given way to applied research and an accompanying *ad hoc* vocabulary crafted: impact, outcomes/outputs, stakeholders, cutting edge research and the inevitable "excellence driven"… At national levels this has mainly been translated into "research by project", interdisciplinarity and impact.

We shall base this contribution largely on the work done and the experience accumulated over the last twenty years by the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) network, which represents 26 funding agencies from 25 European countries.

Biography TBA

Collaboration and Community in the Future of Humanities Research
Thomas Nelson (Wolfson College, University of Oxford)

The persistent paradigm of the Humanities scholar is the 'lone wolf'. Despite some funding bodies introducing project grants on the model of the sciences, the majority of humanities researchers work primarily as individuals – or at least they present themselves that way. But in practice, published scholarship is the work of many individuals: not only the author, but also the editor, peer reviewer, seminar question-asker and chance interlocutor. Except in the case of a multi-authored publication, however, most of this collaboration remains hidden away in a book's acknowledgements or an article's footnotes, preserving the image of the scholarly 'lone wolf'.

In this paper, I explore the place of collaboration and community in the future of Humanities research. I argue that collaboration is an undervalued facet of academic life, that opportunities for it should be encouraged in doctoral studies and beyond, and that the resulting sense of community offers benefits not only for research quality, but also for the well-being of Humanities researchers themselves. In arguing this, I draw on recent research on collaborative scholarship,[1] as well as on my own experience of collaborating at multiple levels: co-authoring chapters and seminar papers; co-organising work-in-progress seminars to bring together early career academics as a community; co-organising a conference on collaboration in ancient literature which highlighted the flaws of the 'solo author' model diachronically; and establishing a 'virtual library' space to enable a sense of community for early career academics during the isolating time of pandemic lockdowns.

I consider ways in which collaboration can be encouraged and fostered during doctoral studies and beyond, and best practice for acknowledging collaboration of all kinds in published work. I hope to prompt a wide-ranging discussion about the roles that both institutions and individuals can play in reshaping our notions of research production and the communities and collaborations that underpin it.

Tom Nelson is a British Academy Postdoctoral Researcher in the Faculty of Classics, University of Oxford, and Non-Stipendiary Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford. His research challenges traditional narratives of literary history at the interface of Greek and Latin literature and scholarship, focusing especially on questions of politics, aesthetics and intertextuality. He has published widely on both Greek and Latin literature, including a new book on Markers of Allusion in Archaic Greek Poetry (CUP, 2023). He very much thrives on working with others and has set up a number of collaborative enterprises with his peers.

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[1] E.g. Bramley, A. and Ogilvie, L. (2021) *Research Collaboration: A Step-by-step Guide to Success* (IOP PUBL Ltd.); Bozeman, B. and Boardman, C. (2014) *Research Collaboration and Team Science: A State-of-the-Art Review and Agenda* (Springer); Griffin, G., Hamberg, K. and Lundgren, B. (2013) *The Social Politics of Research Collaboration* (Routledge).

Investing in the Young
Stephanie Oade (Classics teacher and Head of *Quadrivium*, Oundle School)

This paper addresses some of the key questions around the present state and possible future of the Humanities from perspectives outside of university level study (early years through to secondary education and the UK arts and music scene), hoping to add breadth to the central concerns of the conference and highlight intersections between academia and wider society.

The youngest of children show a natural affinity with the arts, expressing themselves through mark making, music and movement; by the time they are 2 or 3, they begin to explore a world of imagination, representation, and feeling. As they talk, listen and play, they rehearse and develop 'Theory of Mind', the very essence of what makes us human: the ability to understand and predict another person's mind, and therefore to move outside of our own immediate experience into complex social settings, real and imagined. With this understanding of other minds, comes empathy and the world of stories opens up: literature, theatre, opera, film; the opportunity to capture something beyond the reality of the world we live in, to move beyond the actuality of life. But then, for so many young people, this world begins to close down barely before it has opened. There is so much to be done at school, at home, with friends; there is little time for arts and culture, especially those that involve stillness, listening, looking, reading. Youngsters may be told they're no good at music or art (nowhere does anyone say anymore that 'if something's worth doing, it's worth doing badly'; rather, 'there's no career to be had in music', and 'who'd be an artist?'), and children may not find a sense of relevance or inclusion in the arts as they work to establish themselves within a world powered by social, digital, and economic concerns. Moreover, there is often a societal pressure to move away from the study of these disciplines (in some cultures more than others), for 'success' in life to be represented by power, wealth and progress. Arts and culture become marginalised as hobbies, not necessities of life, and the Humanities become indulgences and distractions.

This being so, the political-economic perspective must be addressed: who should fund the arts and Humanities, especially if they seems to exclude more people than they embrace, and when we live in a society struggling to meet the basic living needs of millions of people? How can the value of the Humanities and the arts more broadly be quantified, and where do we find evidence of their worth? We may argue that the Humanities are not just life enriching and life enhancing, that they are community building and personally sustaining, but if these appeals fall on deaf ears, nothing will change. If, however, we better nurture the curiosity and expressive urges of the young to create empathetic adults, engaged with the questions that surround our humanity and convinced of the benefits of a rich Humanities education, we may find a more fertile future lies ahead.

Stephanie began her career as a professional 'cellist: she performed widely as soloist and chamber musician under the auspices of the Countess of Munster Recital Scheme, freelanced with the UK's leading professional orchestras, and then worked as a full time member of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Having previously acquired first class degrees in music and in classics, graduating at the top of her cohort at both Manchester University and the Royal Northern College of Music, Stephanie was keen to

pursue further research in the areas of overlap between classics and music. When the opportunity of undertaking doctoral studies arose, Stephanie left her musical career to take up an Ertegun Graduate Scholarship at Oxford. Her DPhil on the nature of lyric in classics and classical music was completed in 2018 and is currently due for publication. In 2017 Stephanie took up a position teaching classics at Oundle School where she is also Head of Quadrivium. She has two young daughters and occasionally still plays cello.

The Knowledge to Love
Sarah Thomas (Independent Scholar)

The purpose of this paper is to reimagine the humanities as a mode of inquiry that provides practitioners with the knowledge to love. This calls for reclaiming a notion of human nature that is oriented not solely around reason, but also around love. It also requires rethinking how we read texts, calling for a habit of love that complements the prevailing habit of critique. The first part of the paper deals with the humanities in relation to human nature. In our time, the humanities are routinely criticized for their captivity to theory, the latter which rejects any aspiration to truth or human nature. In my view, for the humanities to be taken seriously, humanists must show that the subject of their inquiry – the human experience – has metaphysical significance. Humanists can demonstrate this by basing their work not solely on the study of human cultural expressions, but also on a concept of human nature.

The notion of human nature is contested in our time. Nonetheless, I think the concept has explanatory power. We cannot think of human activity without some understanding of what it means to be human. For the humanities, I would like to suggest that we reclaim human nature, basing it not solely on reason, as classically conceived, but also on love. For this I will turn to the work of Plato, Norris Clarke, Frederick Wilhelmsen, and Paul Tillich. I contend that we must approach our study of the humanities with an attentiveness to the love that lies at the heart of human nature and existence in the community of being. This will enrich not just our understanding of human experience, but also our relational participation in the cosmos. The second part of the paper deals with the humanities and critical theory. Drawing upon the work of Terry Eagleton, I will argue that theory has both enriched and diminished the humanities' ability to provide us with the knowledge to love. While theory's attentiveness to race, gender, and sexuality can strengthen our empathy toward those on the periphery of society, the relentless critique inherent in the method fails to cultivate a disposition of love. To counter this problem, I suggest balancing a habit of critique with a habit of love when reading texts.

Sarah Thomas is an independent scholar based on the East Coast, USA. She began her career as Associate Director of the Zephyr Institute, a philosophical think tank in California, and has since worked in international human rights. Sarah holds a B.A. in Philosophy and Religious Studies and a minor in Data Science from Stanford University. She also studied theology and intellectual history at the University of Oxford, and pursued graduate studies in philosophy at KU Leuven. Sarah has worked at Humanities institutes in both the classical and digital humanities, including the Stanford Literary Lab, Stanford Humanities Center, and Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis. Her principal interests are in relational metaphysics, human rights, and natural law theory.

India and the Global Future of the Humanities
Alex Kostova (University of Sofia)

In this text I aim to bring into focus how the Indian tradition could contribute to the framing of a contemporary vision for the future of humanities. I will address this aim through a threefold division that explores (1) the theoretical scaffolding of the conceptualization of the role of the Humanities in India, (2) the practical implications of this conceptualization and (3) the way (1) and (2) translate into a dynamic framework for the future of humanities that takes into account the plurality of visions that should shape this debate in a global world. First, I will map the analytical principles upon which the post-colonial understanding of the role of the Humanities is based. Here I shall explore Tagore's model of disentanglement of the relation between knowledge and power and distinguishing pluralism from relativism and Gandhi's model of truth (*satya*) as rooted in the function of a distinctive operation (ahimsa) that ultimately leads to freedom of thinking and acting. Second, I will show the practical dimension of this vision. The explicit emancipatory potential of the Humanities emphasizes the cultivation of a non-normative reasoning that gives the form, but not the content of what a moral or emancipatory operation is. Third, it would allow us to outline a vision for a dynamic role of the humanities that is more capable to accommodate the acceleration and rapid progress intrinsic to a technological age, rather than having universal framework for the future of humanities.

Alex Kostova is an Assistant Professor in Philosophy (East-West) at Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski' and holds a PhD in Contemporary Philosophy. Dr. Kostova is author of the book "Truth and Existence. The Latter Heidegger and the Question of the Overcoming of Metaphysics," and currently works on her second book. Prior to her current role she has taken research posts in Vienna, Lecce and Torino. She translates philosophical works from Italian and French to Bulgarian. Alex Kostova is a co-editor of the Annual of the Faculty of Philosophy in Sofia University Postgraduate Book.

Syennesis to Aristotle, 2400 Years on: The Implications of the Machine Learning Revolution in Medicine for the Future of Humanities Research

Jenny Vo-Phamhi (Columbia University) and Katherine Benjamin (University of Oxford)

In the last two decades, machine learning and data science have revolutionised medical research from top to bottom. Surprisingly, many phenomena studied by scholars of the humanities share the same fundamental patterns as those studied by medical scientists, and are therefore likely to benefit from the rich array of methods and tools developed in the field of computational medicine. Scholarship in the humanities therefore stands at the precipice of a similar revolution, as the availability of ever-richer data sets drives powerful and unexpected advances across domains from philology to archaeology.

In this talk, we look at some of the most pressing research questions across the humanities and assess how computational analysis methods from medicine could provide new insights and be applied to these areas of study. We present tools and takeaways that our diverse audience of humanities scholars, scientists, and other academics can use in their own research. The examples highlighted here present just a preview of the possibilities that will emerge when humanities scholars, scientists, mathematicians, and engineers collaborate and build upon each other's work.

Katherine Benjamin is a DPhil candidate in the Mathematical Institute at the University of Oxford. As a member of the Centre for Topological Data Analysis, her research leverages ideas from mathematics, computer science, and machine learning to provide insights into biological and medical phenomena. She is also an organiser for the London Geometry and Machine Learning summer school.

Jenny Vo-Phamhi completed her MSt in Classical Archaeology in 2022 as an Ertegun Scholar at Lincoln College, University of Oxford. She completed her B.A. with Honors in Classics and her B.S. in Computer Science in 2020 at Stanford University and was a visiting student in 2019 at Magdalen College, Oxford, studying Roman social and economic history. She is a member of Stanford University's Maritime Archaeology and Digital Heritage Lab, president of Columbia University's History and Medicine Society, and Director of Artificial Intelligence for Columbia's Innovative Medicine group. Jenny has excavated as a member of the Marzamemi Maritime Heritage Project's scuba diving team in Sicily and now works with the archaeological projects of Yassıada (in the Sea of Marmara), Pabuç Burnu (near Bodrum i.e. ancient Halikarnassos, Turkey), and Corbridge (in Northumberland, England), and with the Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa project at the University of Oxford's School of Archaeology.

The Future Is Collaborative: Historical Psychology in Latin Texts

Jennifer Devereaux (Harvard University), Mohammad Atari (Harvard University), Joseph Dexter (Harvard University), Pramit Chaudhuri (University of Texas at Austin), and Patrick Burns (NYU)

The modern academy has long been defined by a separation between the humanities and sciences that divides research, bureaucracy, and even a sense of education's purpose. Already in the 1950s, C. P. Snow in his famous lecture, later an essay entitled "The Two Cultures," described the humanistic and scientific communities as tribes losing contact with one another. As we move into the age of AI, what we study and how we teach humanistic perspectives depends on these tribes reestablishing contact. In this direction, this paper offers a model for a new kind of intellectual cosmopolitanism, one which brings together a diverse team of researchers who believe that the study of historical psychology can suggest inclusive solutions to contemporary problems (Atari & Henrich 2023).

One such challenge, especially visible on social media and in the rise of political extremism, is hate. Focusing on this topic of ever-increasing concern for social scientists (e.g., Hoover et al. 2021), we will examine an influential line of research, which proposes that hate comprises multiple specific components that can manifest in different forms and contexts (Sternberg 2003). These components are, it has been argued, anger and a preoccupation with purity (Kennedy et al. 2022). Drawing on Moral Foundations Theory, which was created to understand why morality varies across cultures yet still shows recurrent themes (Graham et al. 2013; Haidt & Joseph 2004), we use Natural Language Processing (NLP methods to identify linguistic signatures of anger, purity and hate in Latin. In particular, we investigate the inter-relationships of these concepts by examining the co-localization of not only key terms (e.g., *ira*, *odium*) but also implicit markers of emotive contexts (e.g., affective phenomena, imagery, metaphor). Historical and philological analysis play a key role in interrogating the validity of the claim. We present this team-based model because it clearly demonstrates the value of humanistic study for the scientific study of contemporary issues.

Through application of computational methods to a premodern, non-Anglophone literary corpus vastly different from typical NLP benchmarks (Blasi et al 2022), we illustrate how literary applications can provide a stringent test of scientific methodologies that have heretofore tended to flow into the humanities rather than from them. In addition, we leverage these technical advances to demonstrate how tapping into data from "dead minds" can both improve our knowledge of the ancient world and produce a more capacious understanding of key psychological concepts. Beyond our specific claims, the broader significance of this integrative approach is to add temporal depth and cross-lingual nuance to psychology, a field which has traditionally seen itself as the science of universal human cognition and behavior (Muthukrishna et al. 2021).

All authors are affiliated with the Culture, Cognition, and Coevolution Laboratory at Harvard University. Jennifer Devereaux is a classicist specializing in historical psychology, the history of emotion, and cognitive theory. Mohammad Atari is a social psychologist on the cutting edge of cross-cultural morality studies. Joseph Dexter and Pramit Chaudhuri are the founders and codirectors of the Quantitative

Criticism Lab, which seeks to integrate literary criticism, philology, and big data. Patrick Burns is the Latin tools developer for the Classical Language Toolkit, an open-source project dedicated to text analysis and natural language processing research for historical languages.

The Case for Delight in the Humanities: a View from Te Whanganui-a-Tara
Frazer MacDiarmid (Te Arawhiti—The Office of Maori Crown Relations, Aotearoa New Zealand)

Countless arguments sensibly argue for the value of the humanities for reasons of economy, societal enrichment, pedagogy, and empathy. This presentation stems from my having been persuaded by these arguments on an intellectual level, yet not finding within them resonance with my own motivation for pursuing a path in the humanities.

Amidst humanists' eagerness to justify our fields from a basis of utility, we should not forget the importance of simple pleasure to be derived from our subject. For many of us, the delight we discovered in our discipline was a catalyst for us to choose to make a livelihood from the humanities. In my own case, I pursued a doctorate in theology despite knowing that a career in academia, or any other career for which my studies were a condition of entry, was not for me. I pursued graduate studies out of pure love of the subject matter.

I now find myself working in Treaty of Waitangi settlements in Aotearoa New Zealand (the government's provision of redress to indigenous Māori as acknowledgement of its historical injustices). This field gives no preference to those with doctorates, especially not those whose studies focused on early Christian martyrdom! My position is, I hope, an interesting one from which to assess the significance of a humanities education. I maintain that the primary good my DPhil served was the pleasure I derived from being immersed in academic theology. If I take up a career in secondary school teaching later in life, inspiring this same enjoyment in my students will be my chief motivation.

In this presentation I will share my perspective on my time in graduate humanities studies, with the benefit of two years' distance and a richer life experience. I will explore the ways in which my education in the humanities features in and enriches my extra-academic life. Arguing from a basis of personal experience, I will also draw from scholars' ideas surrounding of the good of 'play', as well as other sources the convenors may recommend.

Frazer grew up in Aotearoa New Zealand, coming to the UK for a gap year. That year eventually turned into nine, and involved three degrees in Theology undertaken at Christ Church, Oxford. In August 2022 he graduated as a Doctor of Philosophy with a thesis examining the early Christian bishop and martyr through a lens of memory. He returned to Aotearoa at the start of the pandemic, where he currently works with Māori to provide reparations for historical injustices perpetrated by the Crown. When he's not playing tennis or squash, he's likely to be found either reading or writing about fiction (under the handle @turnsof_fraze).

Thoughtful Interdisciplinary Thinking – The Future Is Now
Tomás Lally (University of Galway)

In this paper I argue that our concerns about the future of the humanities are more correctly viewed as present concerns rather than future concerns. Following Hannah Arendt I argue that it is the present, that 'gap between past and future' which provides our arena of possibility. Our action or inaction in the present inevitably leads to a future of regret or fulfilment. The question regarding the future of the humanities has been around for decades but I argue it is often our concerns with the future which displace us from urgent action in the present. The future is now. It is only by thoughtful action in the present that we can alter all our tomorrows. I go on to argue, following the later Heidegger that the type of thinking now called for is thoughtful, open interdisciplinary thinking. Our thinking needs to exhibit care and empathy.

> 'Thinking itself is a way…we have to open ourselves to the emerging prospect and direction of the way itself… Only when we walk it,… by thoughtful questioning, are we on the move on the way…Thinking clears its way only by its own questioning advance."[2]

In my paper I draw on two interdisciplinary approaches which model this thoughtful interdisciplinary thinking in the present. Firstly, my own interdisciplinary PhD project which combines a formal philosophical analysis of the relational beginnings of human subjectivity with a creative reflection on subsequent beginnings through a fictional work: a novel. The novel attempts to manifest what the philosophy thesis cannot, which as Simone de Beauvoir argues is the raw feel of human lived experience, 'the taste of another life.'

Secondly, the recent establishment of a physical and virtual interdisciplinary learning environment at our University of Galway campus called an Empathy Lab: the Empathy Lab aims to develop human centric solutions to real world problems and has multiple applications. One example is where engineers / designers of public spaces and amenities can physically wear an older person simulation suit which enables them to personally experience a variety of age related physical and sensory challenges regarding access and the usability of these spaces by older people, thereby affording them the opportunity of factoring these sensitivities into their designs. Both of these endeavours forge meaningful connections, in the first case between philosophical reflection and lived human experience and in the second case between engineering design and lived experience.

Tomás Lally is a PhD Student, studying part-time for a practice-based PhD in English and Philosophy at the University of Galway (UG). His PhD project involves the completion of a philosophy thesis on the origins of subjectivity and the self, titled: How does 'I' Begin? *and the completion of a philosophical novel on the theme of character formation and beginning again, titled* No Way to Say Goodbye. *Tomás returned to academia 6 years ago after a gap of over 30 years. His graduate and post-grad studies were in philosophy. He holds a B.A. (Hons) in Philosophy from NUIM and an M.A. in Philosophy from*

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2 Heidegger, *What is called Thinking*, p.168 – 170

Birkbeck College, University of London. His philosophical interests are in existentialism , phenomenology, philosophy as a way of life and the possibility of providing a grounding for an existentialist ethic. He currently tutors UG undergraduates in English and Philosophy. He is due to complete his studies in May 2023.

Literature Pedagogy in the Digitalized Classroom: Observations from Hong Kong
Flora Ka Yu Mak (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

This paper examines the behavioural changes and pedagogical challenges related to the use of digital aids in literature classrooms in the post-COVID period. The digital revolution this century has brought about the widespread replacement of classroom materials, such as books and handwritten notes, into electronic forms in the world. In the context of humanities classroom, which primarily employs the mode of lecture and discussion, digital advancement manifests in the shift from papers to screens, pens to keyboards (or touch screens). The pandemic in the last few years has accelerated the digitalizing process as lessons were made to be deliverable online. As the pandemic recedes and schools resume face-to-face delivery, it is high time to consider the implication of digital aids over the study of literature in college and university setting.

This paper describes the actual experience of a literature class from the perspective of educators as well as students during ZOOM sessions in Hong Kong and analyzes their implication on the cultivation of a healthy learning community that consistently confers positive value to the act of reading literary works. It raises questions like, how does the online mode affect the reception of literature classes? Given the availability of e-books and open access texts, is it still necessary to place emphasis on the materiality of literary texts? What pedagogical shifts are implied in recent classroom changes, such as the diminished status of a single text version, for the discipline of literature? What are the classroom practices, widely adopted for its convenience and environmental-friendliness, that literature teachers may need to reconsider in order to prevent the depreciation of the study experience of literature? In other words, how should literature pedagogy stay competitive in face of the digital revolution in education?

Dr. Mak, Ka Yu (Flora) obtained her PhD in English (Literary Studies) at The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2020, with a thesis on the idea of impersonality in Romantic and Modernist poetry. She is currently a lecturer, teaching Hong Kong Literature in English and Comparative Approaches in Literary Studies. She is the co-author of The Value of the Humanities in Higher Education: Perspectives from Hong Kong.

Shiny Things and How to Make Them Work
Lena Zlock (University of Oxford)

The future of the humanities will depend on its ability to reach out to audiences beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries and educational levels. Through initiatives like knowledge exchange and public engagement, university-based projects have used technology to facilitate new forms of humanistic research for different kinds of audiences. These projects however face a range of challenges- from funding to correctly tailoring content for different audiences to working with technical experts. In my paper, I will discuss my fieldwork results from interviewing practitioners in these contexts, drawing lessons, challenges, and ways forward from the data. I will show how these projects engage with debates around value and relevance in the humanities, and how experimentation with humanistic research provides a way forward for our collective disciplinary home.

Lena Zlock is an MSc candidate by research in Education in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford. Her research focuses on digitally driven knowledge exchange in the Humanities. Lena is the lead researcher on Sefira*, a mobile video game for cultural institutions, and the principal investigator of the* Voltaire Library Project. *She was previously co-designer of the new MSc in Digital Scholarship at Oxford.*

Talking About Trees: The Paradox of the Environmental Humanities
Conor Brennan (Trinity College Dublin)

"If you search the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2007 synthesis report," Amitav Ghosh writes, "you will not find the words 'history' or 'historical'". Outside and even within the university, the vital role of Humanities perspectives in addressing the climate crisis remains under-acknowledged and under-explored. The types of expertise developed in our disciplines are crucial for understanding the historical conditions in which the crisis has arisen, attending to the specific contexts in which its effects are felt, communicating this awareness across cultural divides, and imagining alternatives. At the same time, this role presents something of a paradox for Humanities research, by instrumentalising a field whose counter-cultural power lies precisely in resisting logics of utility and acceleration. In a sense, the urgency of the climate crisis has simply inverted Brecht's famous line about the necessity of engaged literature: what kinds of times are these, when it is almost a crime *not* to talk about trees?

I propose to consider this paradox in greater detail, outlining some of the key arguments for Humanities contributions to climate justice while contending that to reduce their value to this use would be to overlook their most lasting strengths. I will consider, for instance, the case of linguistic diversity and minority languages, which are now being promoted as a medium of ecological understanding, but which the Humanities might otherwise be well placed to value as ends in themselves. While the discourse around Environmental Humanities is proliferating at speed, I will attend to the widespread image of the Humanities as 'slow', as somehow lagging behind the times. It is this perceived weakness, I will argue, that is in fact our superpower, working to resist techno-utopian responses to the crisis while providing a rare alternative to cultures of consumption and acceleration through 'slow' activities like reading.

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Towards reinvigorating human inquiry and critique, and enervating the emphasis on 'skills': transdisciplinary research as a mechanism for demonstrating the value of the humanities

Lindsay Nickels (University of Cincinnati)

Particularly evident to those of us working in humanities, the STEM fields have been dominating educational paradigms and the workforce for some time now, slowly widening the divide between STEM and humanities while simultaneously compressing the appeal of a humanities education. Though humanistic, nontechnical skills have recently been highlighted as essential to the future workforce (Zucchetti et al. 2019), they have not been universally adopted in a way that has shifted, or even broadened, the scope of educational emphasis. As such, the desirability for technical skills continues to overshadow hard-won nontechnical skills such as resourcefulness, critique, communication savvy, creativity, logical reasoning, self-awareness, and cooperation—all of which are core elements of humanities education and scholarship. Upskilling oneself from a technical perspective is relatively easy, adding on proficiencies for specific programs or tools, but is decidedly more difficult in the humanities since the epistemological foundation on which it is grounded is developed over time, engaging with philosophies that are profound, intricate, and interwoven across the entire spectrum of disciplines. The 'skills' that follow mature through the continued engagement with analysis and critique.

One way our team has been able to propagate the value of humanities is through transdisciplinary research. In working with research partners in the STEM fields, we have begun to bridge the widening divide between academic worlds, demonstrating the impact of human validation of machine generated findings, the application of humanities theories, and the benefits of developing a research framework from the combined perspectives of multiple disciplines. Our transdisciplinary work has garnered respect for the humanities and illustrated its value as the research contributions of our joint endeavors have uncovered more than any uni-disciplinary effort could have. This presents an opportunity to pull some emphasis back to the humanities and continue to cultivate those human skills that may not always be named, but are invaluable to our society.

Lindsay C. Nickels, PhD, is a Sr. Research Associate with the Digital Scholarship Center at the University of Cincinnati in the US. Lindsay was awarded her PhD from Lancaster University in 2020 and is an applied linguist who specializes in corpus-assisted discourse analysis techniques. Her work at the university is mainly focused on the analysis of clinical data, collaborating with transdisciplinary research teams to phenotype disease and patient populations and develop machine learning models to aid in clinical decision making and patient care. Her personal research is situated in field of Critical Discourse Studies, with particular focus on political and media discourses. Additionally, Lindsay works as a part-time lecturer, teaching classes on the topics of linguistics, discourse analysis, and digital skills for humanities majors, and as a sign language interpreter mainly in the venues of theatre, music, postsecondary education, and government.

The Irene Project: *Classical Literature for the Promotion of Peace and Reconciliation in the Classroom*
Rafael Uribe Neira (Otto-von-Guericke University) and Ronald Forero Álvarez (University of La Sabana)

What is the practical value of humanities? Our contribution aims at highlighting the potential of the Humanities in promoting peace and reconciliation after political conflict for the younger generations. For that purpose, we present our ongoing educational project Irene which develops a methodology for conflict resolution based on classical literature for high school students in Colombia. As material for the pedagogical concept, Irene resorts to samples from Classical literature to reflect on violence, peace, and inequality. In our proposed contribution, we developed a learning unit based on a Stesichorus' poem (fr. 97 Finglass; PMGF 222b) to reflect on dialogue, mediation, and negotiation. In a second step, we suggest an outline of how Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* and *Peace*, and Plutarch's *Bravery of Women* can be adapted to teach peace education.

The scope of our project and its transdisciplinary approach (Classic Philology, Pedagogics, Didactics, and Peace Studies) suggests a way to adapt the Classic's heritage to address topics of violence, peace, and reconciliation to young audiences. Additionally, Irene fills the void in lacking materials and tools for peace education in the national curriculum, relevant as the 2016 peace agreement with the former FARC-guerrilla opened a window of opportunity for conflict transformation and the tackling of structural causes of violence. As an educational project, Irene is best situated to fulfill this demand. Finally, since our project underscores the intrinsic value of Humanities for peace and reconciliation, we believe that the adaptation of Classical literature for education purposes in the Colombian context can be an inspiration for peace education and reconciliation efforts not only in the Global South, but for conflict in Europe as well.

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