

# **Humanizing Humanity: the Global Significance of the Humanities**

**Fred Dallmayr<sup>1</sup>**

**Received: 5/7/2012**

**Accepted: 17/3/2014**

## **Abstract**

**Humanities is the oldest area of study that revolves around the study of human beings, what makes us human and our historical development, and what we are expected to do. This discipline deals with human behavior, human nature, social and political values. Humanities comprise of various disciplines that include art, history, law, linguistics, philosophy, religious and ethics among others. All these subjects affect us as human beings and has an effect on our historical development as well as where we are headed to. Proper teaching of the humanities goes beyond learning the best way to write a sentence or how to draw a comparison between historical figures. In other words, if sciences represent the development of the mind, the humanities, as the name implies, exemplify the development of the human soul. In the current paper, the author discusses the crucial contribution of the humanities by exploring its actual meaning as well as its distinctive features.**

**Keywords: Humanities, Liberal Arts, Inter-Disciplinary, Mankind, UNESCO.**

---

1. Emeritus Packey J. Dee Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame.

## **Introduction**

As we read in the charter establishing that world body (in 1946): “the wide diffusion of culture and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man.” To be sure, education whose promotion is entrusted to UNESCO is not limited to the humanities or what we also call the “liberal arts”; however, one can argue—and I shall in fact argue—that the humanities occupy a crucial and indeed pivotal place in the educational household of humankind. This has, in part, to do with the fact that, in many contexts, the humanities are an endangered species. In many colleges and universities today, programs in the humanities or liberal arts are curtailed if not eliminated in favor of a focus on technology and narrowly professional training. Such a shift of focus—I want to argue—comes at a

steep price. As we know, our world today is nearly overrun by atrocities: torture, terrorism, genocide. We have new categories in international law to combat these atrocities: we speak not only of war crimes but “crimes against humanity” (where the latter term is equivalent both to “humankind” and “humaneness”). But how can such crimes be combated or reduced if there is no deliberate cultivation of humanity and humaneness—which is precisely the aim of the humanities?

Looked at it from this angle, the frequent charge leveled against the humanities is revealed as utterly baseless: the charge that such education is useless or devoid of tangible benefit. Surely, the reduction of slaughter and mayhem would be of immense benefit to humanity at any time. What is correct about the charge—although not intended as such—is the fact that

the humanities do not yield an extrinsic benefit or are cultivated for the sake of such benefit; to this extent, their cultivation-as Martha Nussbaum has correctly noted-is without profit or “not for profit.” Philosophically stated, the yield of the humanities is an “intrinsic” good, in the sense that their cultivation-just like the reading of poetry and flute playing-carries its benefit in itself: namely, in the ongoing transformation and “humanization” of the practitioner. This does not mean, of course, that this benefit may not also have broader social and political ramifications; in fact, in my view, these ramifications-like the reduction of mayhem-are part and parcel of the intrinsic good: the humanizing practice of the humanities. In the following, I want to do mainly three things. First, I shall explore the meaning of the “humanities” by turning to the

history of the liberal arts and the so-called “classification of disciplines” in recent centuries. Next, I want to highlight some of the prominent and distinctive features of the humanities and their educational significance. Finally, I want to discuss the crucial contribution the humanities can and should make to the emergence of a properly humane cosmopolis.

### **Humanities and Liberal Arts**

The humanities are often also labeled “human studies” because of their primary concern with human life, human conduct and experience. To this extent, Socrates may be called the father of the humanities because of his shift of attention from astronomy and metaphysics to human affairs (“*ta anthropina*”) including ethics, politics and social psychology. In a way, Plato continued this shift with his emphasis on the transformational

quality of genuine education, leading from random opinion to reflective insight. From Aristotle we have inherited the important division of human knowledge or inquiry into three main branches: “theoretical” science, “practical” inquiry, and “productive” (or constructive-technical) endeavor. While, in the first type, the scientist observes and analyzes phenomena from a detached or neutral standpoint, practical inquiry requires the concrete engagement of the practitioner in human affairs (particularly on the level of ethics and politics); constructive endeavor, finally, involves the fostering of technical “know-how” useful for instrumental purposes. As can readily be seen, among the three Aristotelian types, the practical branch is most closely connected with what today we call the “humanities”—a fact which explains

the close affiliation of many “humanists” with the Aristotelian legacy. In a way, what has happened in modern Western thought is a near reversal of the Aristotelian preference scheme, in the sense that theoretical or pure science in combination with instrumental technology has tended to sideline or smother the practical-humanist concerns.

Another term closely connected with the humanities is that of the “liberal arts.” The term goes back to the school curriculum established by the Stoics during the Roman Empire—a curriculum that was continued and fleshed out during the European Middle Ages. It was customary at the time to speak of seven liberal arts, with the educational process moving through two stages: from the more elementary “*trivium*” to the more advanced “*quadrivium*”—a sequence reflecting distantly the

Platonic idea of the transformational quality of human learning. I am not concerned here with the details of the classical curriculum; rather I want to turn to the employed terminology. Why were the disciplines offered in the classical curriculum called “liberal arts” (*artes liberales*)? One explanation frequently advanced is that these were disciplines fit for the education of “free” citizens rather than slaves (of whom the Roman Empire had plenty). There is probably some grain of truth to this explanation-but it does not account for the persistence of the term in societies devoid of slavery or after slavery had long been abolished. Removed from narrow ideological blinders, the term in fact carries another possible and deeper meaning: the idea that the liberal arts contribute to the liberty or freedom of practitioners, to their liberation from external tutelage and

the subservience to materialistic or instrumental benefits. Taken in this sense, the liberal arts clearly resonate with the non-utilitarian and “not-for-profit” character of the humanities; differently put, liberty here is again an intrinsic good of the practice and not an extrinsic project or subsidiary product.

As indicated before, modern Western thought entailed a near reversal of the Greek and Roman concern with practical human affairs (*ta anthropina*). This is curious or surprising in view of the simultaneous ascent of “anthropocentrism” in modern intellectual life. What one needs to take into account, however, is the fact that this ascent was predominantly channeled in the direction of the scientific analysis and control of “external” nature and the technical utilization of this control. One of the leading figures inaugurating the modern shift was

the philosopher-scientist Francis Bacon for whom all study or learning was oriented toward one goal or tangible “profit”: the “enhancement of man’s estate” and comfortable living. In his *Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*, Bacon dramatically re-designed the traditional (Aristotelian) tripartition of inquiry: namely, by juxtaposing the fields of history, poetry, and scientific philosophy. While history amounted to no more than the gathering of data, and poetry to a mere flight of fancy, scientific inquiry was extolled as the only true path to knowledge proceeding through the investigation of the natural “laws” of cause and effect. Under the impact of Bacon and his followers, the traditional domain of “*praxis*” or practical thought was either shunted aside or—still more fatefully—was transformed into a branch of “theoretical” or scientific

knowledge. Thus, ethics was tendentially transformed into the study of psychic affects and aversions and thus into a corollary of empirical psychology. A similarly far-ranging change happened in the domain of “economics” which, for Aristotelians, involved the contributions of the “household” (*oikos*) to the good life. Shifting again radically from *praxis* to theory, modern economics developed into the rational-mathematical calculation of profit in a market largely devoid of any considerations of social well-being or justice.

As one should note in fairness, however, the triumph of the Baconian system in modernity was contested all along by a counter-current or a host of voices remonstrating against the domination of theory over *praxis*. A particularly significant counter-trend was the

current of “humanism” extending from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment to the Romantic era. Among Renaissance and post-Renaissance figures special mention should be made of the Italian thinkers Mario Nizolio, Tommaso Campanella, and Giambattista Vico. In sharp contrast to Bacon, Nizolio and Campanella assigned primary significance to the fields of literature and history, treating these fields as rich storehouses of narratives and experiences in comparison with which the maxims of rational-scientific philosophy are only pale and lifeless abstractions. On the eve of the Enlightenment, Vico boldly proclaimed the preeminence of historical and “human” studies over other sciences, tracing this preferred status to their roots in “practical” knowledge: the fact that history and social life are human activities and thus more readily intelligible (“*verum*

*et factum convertuntur*”). A bit later, and mainly in response to the pretense of an abstract rationalism, the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder issued a plea for the study of different cultures and languages—that is, for a broad study of the “humanities”—arguing that only concrete instances and practical examples could foster the desired “progress” of humankind: the genuine “humanization” of humanity. It was in this connection that Herder formulated the important notion of an upward formation or transformation of humanity (“*Emporbildung zur Humanität*”)—a notion that can serve as basic motto for the humanities.

During the subsequent two centuries, “positivism” (the focus on positively useful knowledge) brought increasing pressure on all the disciplines in the “republic of knowledge,” seeking to assimilate them to the model of scientific

cause-effect analysis. This pressure was felt not only in ethics and economics, but also in historiography, linguistics, and even in the study of politics where public conduct was increasingly leveled into quantitative measurement. No doubt, efforts were repeatedly launched to rescue aspects of the social and human sciences from the positivist tentacles. The nineteenth century, in fact, was replete with complex classification schemes seeking to differentiate certain forms of study from the domain of strict scientific inquiry. This is not the place to recount this ongoing “battle of the faculties”; a few comments must suffice. One prominent and widely influential scheme was the distinction between natural sciences and “mental” sciences (*Naturwissenschaften* vs. *Geisteswissenschaften*). For advocates of this scheme, the latter disciplines were anchored in insights generated

by the human mind or “spirit”; they all dealt with phenomena available directly to humane experience and mental life. Although appealing at a first glance, this distinction was challenged and undermined, however, by the growing inroads of empirical psychology into mental processes. Another classification scheme relied on the separation between natural science and history, where the former was said to focus on general laws and the second on particular events (thus yielding a distinction between “nomothetic” and “idiographic” disciplines). Yet, as long as particular events were not actively interpreted and understood, historiography could not rise above empirical data-gathering (along Baconian lines). What emerged from these impasses, in the long run, was the realization that the “humanities” could not be rescued or restored without a return to human *praxis* and



the differentiation between two kinds of practical endeavor: the endeavor either to know and control nature or else to articulate “meaning” in practical conduct.

### **The Humanities as Practical Endeavor**

In late modern and recent times, the shift toward *praxis*-often inspired by Aristotle’s legacy-was promoted by a number of philosophical orientations, including pragmatism, ordinary language philosophy, and hermeneutics. For the sake of brevity, I shall concentrate here on the latter and its leading representative, Hans-Georg Gadamer. As is well known, Gadamer’s hermeneutics revolves around interpretation and “understanding,” an understanding accomplished through the dialogical interchange between reader and text, between speaker and interlocutor. However, what is not always

sufficiently recognized is that “understanding” here is not simply a cognitive exercise, the acquisition of knowledge by a detached “knower,” but always involves a practical engagement, a close embroilment of thought and *praxis*. As Gadamer repeatedly emphasizes, entering into dialogical exchange involves an intellectual as well as existential risk-taking: one runs the risk of falling short, of being shown to be wrong, of undergoing an experience which may transform one’s life (not only change one’s “mind”). In his *Truth and Method*, he frequently invokes Aeschylus’s formula “*pathei mathos*,” which means having learned through suffering or the “hard way,” being in the grip of a learning experience which changes our existence-we might say: an experience which “humanizes” us. From this angle, learning is “practical” not simply in a utilitarian or instrumental sense;

nor does it involve the simple application of abstract maxims or principles to empirical situations. Rather, it means taking experience seriously as a presupposition and guidepost to knowledge and ethical conduct. In this broad sense, Gadamer can rightly be considered as an eminent mentor of the humanities.

The title of “mentor” is not an arbitrary designation but follows directly from his work. An important part of *Truth and Method* deals with the “significance of the humanist tradition for the human sciences” (or humanities). To illustrate this significance Gadamer discusses a number of prominent features (or “guiding ideas”) of the humanist tradition relevant for the study of the humanities. A central theme is that of “*Bildung*,” a term which designates not simply a given empirical culture or way of life, but

rather denotes a process of cultivation, a process of “formation” or transformation. As Gadamer notes, the German word “*Bildung*” derives from “*Bild*” (image) and thus carries within it the older notion of an “*imago Dei*” or divine image “in the likeness of which human beings are fashioned and which they must strive to achieve.” Thus, what resonates in the word is not just a simple pedagogical recipe, but a complex happening which one might call “humanization as divinization” (or the reverse). The most important aspect stressed by Gadamer is the fact that formation or transformation in this sense does not pursue an extrinsic profit, but carries its value within itself. “It is not an accident,” he writes, “that *Bildung* in this respect resembles the Great term *physis*. Like nature (*physis*), *Bildung* has no goals outside itself.” Taken in this sense, *Bildung* transcends the

mere training of existing talents or aptitudes for occupational or career purposes. Rather, in *Bildung* “that by which and through which one is formed becomes and remains completely one’s own.”

In the Western humanist tradition, *Bildung* was not a static concept or idea, but involved itself a process of cultivation, of steady reformulation and reinterpretation. Starting from the writings of Renaissance and pietistic thinkers, the term acquired decisive accents or impulses during the Enlightenment and the ensuing period of German classical thought. Herder’s contribution was previously mentioned; his immediate interlocutors were the poet Klopstock and Immanuel Kant. For Gadamer, however, a decisive reformulation derives from the work of Hegel. In his *Philosophical Propaedeutics* and his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel

clearly insisted on the point that *Bildung* is not limited to the fine-tuning of existing capacities, but involves a movement of self-transgression in response to challenges. Particularly important in this context is Hegel’s notion of “alienation,” his insistence that learning has to proceed through otherness, that self-finding can only happen through the encounter with others and the world. In Gadamer’s words: “The basic and correct idea is this: To recognize one’s own in the alien, to become at home in it-this is the basic movement of spirit (*Geist*) whose essence consists only in returning to itself from and through otherness.” One can readily see how fruitful this idea was for the subsequent development of the human sciences, especially the disciplines of history, anthropology, and literature-provided these disciplines remained faithful to the

humanist tradition. For, Gadamer states, “what properly constitutes the human studies can be grasped more readily from the tradition of *Bildung* than from the modern canon of natural-scientific method.”

Another important feature of the humanist tradition and the humanities is the accent on prudential “judgment” (*Urteil*) in contradistinction from apodictic knowledge and the epistemic claims of strict science. In this respect, the Aristotelian legacy of “*phronesis*” is decisive which involves the search for the right middle path (*mesotes*) and the cultivation of the ethical ability to weigh carefully the pros and cons of a given situation. Just like the stress on formative *Bildung*, the notion of prudential judgment stands in opposition to, or at least modifies, the Enlightenment emphasis on universal maxims by requiring attention to particular

aspects—an attention which is also characteristic of the English “common-law” tradition with its reliance of concrete precedents. In Gadamer’s words: “Sensible reasoning here is exhibited primarily in the faculty to judge about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, fitting or unfitting. Having sound judgment in this respect does not mean the ability to subsume particular instances under universal rules, but rather the capacity to know what is really important: that is, to judge cases from a right or sound perspective.” The latter perspective draws its inspiration from Aristotelian teachings, and not from Kantian rationalism—not even from Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* where judging and the weighing of pros and cons remain subordinated to the rule of “categorical imperatives.” From the vantage of humanism and the humanities, this kind of

subordination is uncongenial and unacceptable because it involves the surrender of *praxis* and practical engagement in favor of abstract knowledge.

Closely connected with the role of judgment, and in many ways the pivot of humanism, is the conception of “common sense” (*sensus communis*). As extolled in the humanist tradition, judgment is not the expression of a purely private or idiosyncratic opinion, but a faculty nurtured in a community or social context, in interaction with other members of that context. To this extent, it is a shared or “public” sense-without ceasing to be amenable to ongoing revision and transformation. An early modern champion of the conception was Giambattista Vico whose defense of rhetoric and public discourse mounted a challenge to Descartes’ celebration of the isolated “*cogito*”

separated from world and society. In Gadamer’s account: “A prominent teacher of rhetoric, Vico stands in the humanist tradition dating back to antiquity. Quite clearly, this tradition is important for the self-understanding of the humanities or human sciences.” What Vico attempted to do was to give a new direction and a new meaning to modern education and ultimately to the Enlightenment, a direction which would grant primacy not to abstractly universal cognition, but to practical, ethically nurtured experience in a social context. To quote Gadamer again: “For Vico, the wisdom of the ancients, their cultivation of prudence and eloquence, remains indispensable precisely in the face of modern science and its quantitative methodology. For, even now, the most important aspect of education is something else: namely, the

cultivation of the ‘*sensus communis*’ which is nurtured not by apodictic truth but by weighing the likely or probably.” Seen from this angle, the *sensus communis* is not merely an individual aptitude but “a sense that founds community or communality (*Gemeinsamkeit*).”

As can readily be seen, common sense here is not simply a set of empirical beliefs, but the emblem of an ethical quest for public virtue (in both the Aristotelian and Stoic sense). The ethical quality of the conception was clearly grasped by Lord Shaftesbury and the entire school of Scottish moralists, from Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Reid and Adam Ferguson. Here one has to take note of the difference between ethical common sense and modern “natural law,” the latter entirely committed to abstract rational principles. “What Shaftesbury had in mind,” Gadamer

comments, “is not so much a universal human capacity captured by modern natural law, but rather a social virtue, a virtue of the heart more than of the head.” In Shaftesbury’s work, the notion of common sense was closely associated with the social virtue of empathy or “sympathy” functioning as the foundation of his entire metaphysics and as the crucial antipode to the modern glorification of self-interest. In the hands of his followers-especially Hutcheson and Reid-the combination of common sense and sympathy was further developed and fleshed out into the theory of “moral sense” which served as a vital (though ultimately sidelined) counter-current to the liberal individualism of Hobbes and John Locke. To quote Gadamer again: “It was in the philosophy of the Scottish moralists that ‘common sense’ acquired its truly central

systematic significance—a significance which stood polemically against both rationalist metaphysics and its skeptical deconstruction, and which built its own new system on the basis of the original and ‘natural’ judgments of common sense.” At the same time, Scottish moralists never allowed common sense to disintegrate into private preferences. In the words of Thomas Reid, its judgment “serves to direct us in the common affairs of life, where our reasoning faculty would leave us in the dark.” Hence, Gadamer adds, the good sense tradition “not only offers a cure for the ‘moon-sickness’ of metaphysics, but provides the basis for a moral philosophy that really does justice to social life.”

### **The Humanities and Global Democracy**

From historical reminiscences we need to return now to our

contemporary situation. As should be clear, the historical excursus was designed primarily to alert us to some key features—like *Bildung*, prudential judgment, and shared sensibility—without which the humanities cannot flourish at any time. In their works, people like Vico, Herder, and the Scottish moralists sought to establish a safe haven or a beachhead for human studies against the onslaught of anti-humanist tendencies in modernity. In the meantime, this onslaught has turned into something like a tsunami. Wherever one looks, in the West as well as the non-West, the humanities today find themselves on the defensive in the face of so-called “modernizing” forces privileging scientific and technological advances; sometimes the defense resembles a “last stand” or nearly abandoned outpost. In lieu of humanizing *Bildung* we have the

increasing stress on career objectives; instead of the cultivation of judgment, we find utilitarian or ideological maxims; in place of common sense we have the relentless glorification of privatization and private profit. Even some of the traditional custodians of the humanities -like American liberal arts colleges-are increasingly being transformed into corporate business. In her book *Not for Profit* (2010), Martha Nussbaum rightly deplores these developments. As she observes, radical educational changes are occurring today: “The humanities and the arts are being cut away, in both primary/secondary and college/university education, in virtually every nation of the world. Seen by policy-makers as useless frills, at a time when nations must cut away all useless things in order to stay competitive in the global market, they are rapidly losing their

place in curricula, and also in the minds and hearts of parents and children.”

Nussbaum’s book provides many concrete examples to back up her claim of a “silent crisis,” that is, a crisis which is insidious and pervasive but not fully recognized. In her presentation, what is threatened by this crisis are not only curricula and educational institutions but rather-and this is her most provocative insight-the future of democracy in our world. Here the crucial significance of the humanities for the cultivation of practical judgment and shared sensibility comes to the fore. In her words (which deserve to be quoted in full):

Thirsty for national profit, nations and their systems of education are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, societies



(nations) all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements. The future of the world's democracies hangs in the balance.

Based on this insight, Nussbaum's book delineates two basic models of education, what she calls "education for profit" and "education for democracy," where the former is basically geared toward economic development or growth and the second toward the fostering of humanistic "capabilities" (what I prefer to call the formation or *Bildung* of character, good judgment and sensibility). As she writes: "Producing economic growth does not mean producing democracy. Nor does it mean producing a healthy,

engaged, educated population in which opportunities for a good life are available to all social classes." On the other hand, cultivation of the humanities and liberal arts-properly pruned of older elitist tendencies-can and should form the core of a contemporary "education for democracy."

Significantly, democracy for Nussbaum is not a Western or American prerogative but a global aspiration; accordingly, education for democracy today has to have a global or cosmopolitan cast. One of the most stirring chapters in her book deals with the requisites of a genuinely cosmopolitan *Bildung* or the formation of "citizens of the world." Taking a leaf from Rabindranath Tagore she states that, by contrast to the earlier segregation of continents and cultures, we live today in a world where "people face one another across gulfs of

geography, language, and nationality”; hence our problems are “global in scope.” To find our way in this context we need more than “the thin norms of market exchange” which are oriented toward private gain; rather, a new pedagogy is needed:

The world’s schools, colleges, and universities have an important and urgent task: to cultivate in students the ability to see themselves as members of a heterogeneous nation (for all modern nations are heterogeneous), and a still more heterogeneous world, and to understand something of the history and character of the diverse groups that inhabit it.

Among the pioneers of cosmopolitan pedagogy or *Bildung*, Nussbaum mentions above all the Indian Tagore-the founder of Visva-Bharati with its focus on liberal arts education-and the American

philosopher John Dewey with his commitment to the fostering of global civility and citizenship. Contrary to some narrowly instrumentalist readings, she rightly stresses Dewey’s broadly humanist outlook, an outlook which was “capacious and nonreductive” and insisted on “human relationships rich in meaning, emotion, and curiosity.” What these and other educational pioneers encouraged was a radical engagement with the pluralism of our world, a “citizen - of - the-world education” as part and parcel of the liberal arts curriculum in schools and colleges.

Nussbaum’s *Not for Profit* ends on a sober or sobering note - not a despairing note, but one acknowledging the challenge ahead. The “silent crisis” is not going to go away by itself, but requires a courageous response. “If the real clash of civilizations,” she writes, “is

a clash within the human soul - as greed and narcissism contend against respect and love - then all modern societies are rapidly losing the battle, as they feed the forces that lead to violence and dehumanization and fail to feed the forces that lead to cultures of equality and respect.” So, there is a struggle going on between humanization and dehumanization. As major resources in the struggle for humanization, the Mahatma Gandhi singled out the commitments to *ahmisa* (non-violence) and *satyagraha* (the quest for truth and goodness). In terms of its constitution, UNESCO is predicated precisely on this kind of struggle. It seems appropriate in this context to recall the opening sentence of its preamble: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” To which the preamble adds these statements

(partially quoted before): “That the wide diffusion of culture and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfill in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern”; and “that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind.”

## References

- [1] Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Preamble, see <http://portal.unesco.org>.
- [2] Compare, e.g., Jennifer Washburn, University, Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of American Higher Education (New York: Basic Books, 2005); and Noam Chomsky, “Public Education under Massive Corporate Assault,” (August 5, 2011) <http://www.readersupportednews.org/off-site-opinion-section/7>.

- [3] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- [4] Even without a close attachment to the Aristotelian legacy, political theorist Hannah Arendt in her writings stipulated a tripartition of human endeavors: labor, work, and action—where the second corresponds to technical know-how and the third to Aristotle’s practical branch. See, e.g., *The Human Condition: A Study of the Central Dilemmas Facing Modern Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 9.
- [5] For some background see Robert Flint, *Philosophy as Scientia Scientiarum and a History of Classifications of the Sciences* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1904); also my “Political Science and the Two Cultures,” in *Beyond Dogma and Despair: Toward a Critical Phenomenology of Politics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), pp. 21-42.
- [6] Compare, e.g., Henry M. Wriston, *The Nature of a Liberal College* (Appleton, WI: Lawrence University Press, 1937); Brand Blanshard, *The Uses of a Liberal Education, and Other Talks to Students* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1973).
- [7] On the Baconian Organon and his “classification” of knowledge compare, e.g., Henry E. Bliss, *The Organization of Knowledge and the System of the Sciences* (New York: Holt, 1929), pp. 316-320.
- [8] See Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time (De Nostri Temporis Studiorum Ratione)*, trans. Elio Gianturco, with introduction by Donald P. Verene (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).
- [9] See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, with epilogue by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Frankfurt-Main: Suhrkamp, 1967).
- [10] For a more detailed account of these schemes see my “Political Science and the Two Cultures,” pp. 30-36.
- [11] In terms of the republic of knowledge, the “practical turn” can be found, e.g., in Martin Heidegger’s emphasis on the central category of “care” (*Sorge*) and its differentiation into care about things, care for others, and self-care. See *Being and*

Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper Row, 1962), par. 41-42, pp. 235-244. The scheme can be compared with Max Scheler's pointed distinction between instrumental "Leistungswissen," metaphysical "Erlösungswissen," and humanistic "Bildungswissen"; see his *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* (Leipzig: Neue Geist Verlag, 1926). A similar practical shift, but along more neo-Kantian lines, can be found in Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971). Compare also Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), and Wilhelm Hennis, *Politik und praktische Philosophie* (Neuwied and Berlin: Luchterhand, 1963).

[12] See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 356-357.

[13] *Truth and Method*, pp. 9-11. (In the above and subsequent citations, the translation is slightly altered for the

sake of clarity).

[14] *Truth and Method*, pp. 14, 18.

[15] *Truth and Method*, pp. 31-32.

[16] *Truth and Method*, pp. 19-21. As Gadamer adds (p. 21): "According to Vico, what gives to human striving its direction is not the abstract universality of reason but the concrete universality represented by the community of a group, a people, a nation, and ultimately of humanity at large. Hence, developing this communal sense is of decisive importance for human life."

[17] *Truth and Method*, pp. 24-25. See also Thomas Reid, *The Philosophical Works*, ed. William Hamilton (8<sup>th</sup> ed.; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), vol. 2, p. 774. Unsurprisingly, Alasdair MacIntyre in his *After Virtue* devotes close attention to the teachings of the Scottish "enlightenment"; see *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 37-39, 272. Compare also Louis Schneider, ed., *The Scottish Moralists on Human Nature and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

- [18] Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, p. 2.
- [19] *Not for Profit*, pp. 2, 15, 24. Among pioneering defenders of the humanities during the last two centuries, Nussbaum (pp. 18, 57-68) mentions especially the philosophers Rousseau and John Dewey and the educators Friedrich Froebel in Germany, Johann Pestalozzi in Switzerland, Bronson Alcott in the United States, and Maria Montessori in Italy. The most prominent Indian educator celebrated throughout the book is the poet Rabindranath Tagore. One probably would have to add Rudolf Steiner to her list.
- [20] . *Not for Profit*, pp. 79-80, 86, 91. One aspect strongly emphasized by Nussbaum is multi-lingual training, the demand that “all students should learn at least one foreign language” (p. 90).
- [21] *Not for Profit*, p. 143. For a similar perspective see also Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), and Elise Boulding, *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990).
- [22] UNESCO Constitution, Preamble.

## انسانی کردن انسانیت: اهمیت جهانی علوم انسانی

فرد المایر<sup>۱</sup>

تاریخ پذیرش: ۹۲/۱۲/۲۶

تاریخ دریافت: ۹۱/۴/۱۵

این مقاله با هدف کشف رابطه بین شعر حماسی و خودآگاهی ملی و اینکه در مطالعه‌ی خاص چگونه شاهنامه ممکن است از این زاویه، تجزیه و تحلیل شود؟ چه رابطه‌ای بین شاهنامه و خودآگاهی ملی ایران است؟ چگونه می‌توان سخنی درباره‌ی خودآگاهی ملی ایرانیان در این متن گفت؟ متن چه چیزی را در مورد هویت ایرانیان آشکار می‌کند؟ یک سؤال مرتبط نیز باید پاسخ داده شود: آیا شاهنامه حماسه است؟

این صرفاً یک سؤال فضل‌فروشانه با تعاریف و برچسب مربوط نیست. آنچه که روشن خواهد شد این است که یک حماسه، بینش عمیق در مورد آگاهی ملی مردم است که چه کسی به آن‌ها تعلق دارد یا آن‌ها به چه کسی تعلق دارند. برای شناخت، یک شعر به‌عنوان حماسه و یا یک بیانی‌ی مهم در مورد آگاهی ملی از مردم است.

واژگان کلیدی: شاهنامه، خودآگاهی ملی، شعر حماسی، ایران.

---

۱. استاد بازنشسته، J. Packey علوم سیاسی، دانشگاه نوتردام.