To examine and justify the position of humanities as a field, we must first describe it (defining it still remains an ambiguous task as Rens Bod points out, “What are the humanities? It is like the notion of ‘time’ in St. Augustine: if you don’t ask, we know, but if you ask, we are left empty-handed.” [*A New History of the Humanities: The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2013)]). The concept in itself, however, evokes the expectation of a discipline—or even just a field of interest—that is wholly centred upon the human, and his thoughts and experiences.

Notably though, the humanities have much too often been conflated with the arts, but it is crucial to remember that the latter is only a *part* of the former. Philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, history and language are then the means to an end. Of course, “[t]he humanities…are disciplines of memory and imagination,” says the American Academy of Arts & Science’s Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences to the U. S. Congress [The Heart of the Matter, June 2013. via Alan Liu. “What Are the Humanities?”, 4Humanities.org] Thus, insights that are creatively yet critically appointed are imperative to the study of the humanities. To this extent, subsequent critical analysis and method as well as an analytical approach remain as obvious tools for deciphering the humanities.

In modern scholastics, humanities has been too easily remanded to the status of merely being the contrary to the sciences, but such was definitely not the case at the inception of organized formal education in Europe. From a more general education course—in 5th century BCE Greece, its meaning was specialised into classical studies in 15th century Italy, and it is only likely that with more time, the humanities evolve into a near-unrecognizable form so as to accommodate the new developments in knowledge production. Naturally, this transformation will be accompanied by a re-evaluation supported by postcolonial research and reclamation. For instance, in many Indian languages the meaning of “humanities” is more associated with “empathy,” which sufficiently challenges the Western connotation of the word—it being more objective, even in its pursuit of “a detailed understanding of human behaviour, economies, cultures and societies” [The British Academy for Humanities & Social Sciences, “Press Pack”.]

Another key aspect of the humanities is the role of time. Much of all humanities scholarship has been reflective and historicized, and understandably so. If humanities is to be indeed considered a discipline focusing on the human, it would necessitate a perpetual “looking back.” Contemporary issues and triumphs have their roots in the past and whether it be personal or collective memory, the impact of any event persists long after its occurrence. Furthermore, the future too is then viewed through the kaleidoscope of time, and all who *have been*, *are*, and *will be* participate in the incessant motion of what has been here called “knowledge production.”

Yet, one must return to the fact that the humanities is, at its core, undefinable, or at least in any exhaustive and decisive way. It is rather a record that is concerned with all (“all,” here meaning “all subjects”—individuals as subjects; and disciplines as subjects) and simultaneously open to all.

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