



Restating the Value of the Humanities

edited by
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Preface

Margaret Kelleher and Jane Conroy

Writing in the *New York Times* on 13 June 2011, literary critic Stanley Fish observed: ‘While we have been anguishing over the fate of the humanities, the humanities have been busily moving into, and even colonizing, the fields that were supposedly displacing them....’ Fish’s comments, made within an article discussing recent work in ‘geohumanities’ by Edward Ayers, sound a welcome note of confidence and forward movement, reminding us that the humanities are, and always have been, disciplines in motion and in change. Yet such optimism can at times be difficult to convey, and maintain, in the face of a lack of confidence in some spheres as to the role and value of the humanities and, relatedly, a lack of public knowledge as to the diversity of what now constitutes humanities research. The contributions that comprise this collection of papers on *Restating the Value of the Humanities* are thus written in a spirit of deep confidence in the humanities and their worth, and enthusiastic willingness to reflect on what is constant and what is changing in our subjects and disciplines. The collection is located largely in an Irish academic context, including observations on national infrastructural and institutional issues which, we trust, can inform a larger and increasingly vibrant international debate concerning the humanities and why they matter.

At their most fundamental, the humanities provide basic and in-depth insights into the ongoing challenges faced by our society, through the knowledge of past challenges and the diverse responses they have engendered, and through the ability to imagine alternative futures. The humanities teach us, for example, that the history of tradition is itself a history of innovation, and that the most enduring innovations are produced by those who have the capacity for both a forward and backward look. The humanities provide rich comparative transcultural perspectives, the absence of which can impoverish and endanger our societies, and the humanities offer also the opportunity to learn from past failures and successes, through close-up studies of human adaptation, resistance and survival.

The humanities and human sciences are so much part of all our lives that often we are hardly conscious of their role. Although every single person in the world is directly concerned by what is discovered, created, clarified, refuted or explained by some part of the humanities, few people are conscious of how that work is managed and supported, or the resources it needs, or how they themselves are caught up in it, how they are themselves practitioners of the humanities. We are all practising humanists and we are all affected by humanities’ methods, failures and achievements.

As a number of contributors examine in this publication, the term ‘Anthropocene humanities’ – coined at the beginning of the twenty-first century to denote a new geological era marked by humans as geological agents – is an especially dramatic example of a shift in temporal scale necessitated by environmental change. If, as historian Dipesh Chakrabarty has remarked, ‘to call human beings geological agents is to scale up our imagination of the human’,¹ then new scales of representation are quite urgently needed

from various realms in the humanities (the visual, literary, philosophical and ethical and religious), with the humanities made newly visible as sources of insight into human motivation and as means of alternative imaginings.

Other changes in the visibility of the humanities can be quieter but also with lasting significance. ‘Public humanities’ has become an accepted term internationally, most especially in North America, term, though its meaning is not self-evident. The international Consortium for Humanities Centres and Institutes offers a useful delineation of its various usages: ‘It can, variously, be taken to imply extra-mural partnerships between universities and their surrounding communities; the pursuit of humanities research with an overtly public sphere (rather than disciplinary) interest in mind; the expansion of the “publics” we wish to cultivate as audiences for our disciplinary research, etc.’² The digitization of the 1901 and 1911 census, as described in the opening essay, is a rich illustration of the extent of public engagement that can be achieved. Yet, as noted by our contributors, the criterion by which ‘public value’ is measured is too often solely financial: that we value the humanities in and of themselves bears much restating.

Societal changes – and the consequent challenges and opportunities – have thus resulted in the humanities being offered a role in new research environments and a place in collaborative projects that are often multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary in character. The case for the humanities playing an active role in defining multidisciplinary research priorities from the outset – rather than disciplinary afterthought or addendum – is eloquently made throughout these essays, as is the importance of challenging what Vincent Woods in his afterword describes as ‘the insidious separation of arts and humanities from society, politics and economics.’ ‘Constraint is a condition of creativity, not a nemesis’ writes Doris Sommer, Director of the influential Cultural Agents initiative at Harvard University which promotes alliances between humanists and artists as ‘cultural agents.’³ While such a quotable comment could all too easily be deployed as economic palliative, in Sommer’s work it is a powerful reminder of the ‘transformative power of humanistic inquiry and of art – of artists and critics – to effect change and thus improve social systems through creative action.’⁴ To quote again from Sommer, ‘The urgent issue today is the role of art and the humanities in civic development. Art’s socially constitutive appeal needs more advocates; otherwise, citizens may not appreciate art,

¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘The Climate of History: Four Theses’, *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Winter 2005), 206.

² ‘Public Humanities/The Academic and the Civic’, CHCI Discussion Document, Annual Meeting 2012.

³ See <http://www.culturalagents.org>, accessed 1 April 2013.

⁴ James J. Bono, Tim Dean and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, ‘Introduction: Future, Heteronomy, Invention’, in James J. Bono, Tim Dean and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (eds), *A Time for the Humanities: Futurity and the Limits of Autonomy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 13.

⁵ Doris Sommer, ‘Crisis Means Turning Point: A Manifesto for Art and Accountability’, in James J. Bono, Tim Dean and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (eds), *A Time for the Humanities*, p. 216.

including the art of interpretation, as the precious foundation of democratic life.²⁵

Changes in the relationship between and within disciplines are the subject of the second section on ‘emerging and converging disciplines’ in which contributors were invited to reflect on the factors that have enabled and limited such change. In many cases, what may appear from one perspective to be an ‘emerging’ discipline (such as music technology or medical humanities) is, from another, a discipline which has existed a very long time (music) or a reversion to an earlier practice (medical education). In many of these disciplines, such as the creative arts for example, research is longstanding but may often be invisible – and identifying the reasons for this invisibility is another significant theme within these essays. Relatedly, the contributors’ insights into the origins of terms (e.g. ‘digital humanities’, ‘environmental humanities’), their diverse usage, and the time lag between technologies and nomenclature (e.g. sonic arts) offer rich reflections for other disciplines and subject areas. Of especial pertinence to all humanities researchers who work in the areas of digital humanities and humanities computing is the question: ‘Can an individual researcher still “do” digital humanities without “buying in” to the frameworks, consortia and standards organizations?’ Taken together, these essays also expose a serious reluctance within Irish universities to think through the methodological and professional dimensions of subjects and disciplines and to reflect on how knowledge is currently compartmentalized, and institutionalized, within academia in Ireland. There are exceptions, such as, to take one example, the Higher Education Authority’s substantial funding support for the creation of an Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences research nexus in NUI, Galway. However, despite such important official recognition of the potential of transdisciplinary research, the university system has yet to adapt fully to its requirements.

The difficulties in securing visibility, support and sustainability for subjects which lack a clear disciplinary home base is also vividly evident from these essays. As noted in the context of ‘creative arts and media’, but with wide implications elsewhere, ‘the fluidity of disciplinary boundaries, the exciting possibility of collaboration and convergence, and the adaptation of theoretical and practice models from one domain to another, does not always produce research which is measurable and quantifiable’ – and certainly not in its early years. Nor, as work in digital humanities or music technology testifies, can traditional criteria of research longevity be applied without complication. What emerges from this section is the importance of identifying the different phases of development of newly emerging or consolidating disciplines, of recognizing the value of different ‘outputs’, ‘deliverables’ and ‘performance indicators’, and of reflecting consciously on the appropriateness of modes of funding, assessment and evaluation, and even of terminology. In particular, the ‘two-stools’ plight of valuable research initiatives deserves attention, and with this the acceptance of the possibility that some ‘high-risk’ funding investment in new areas cannot offer immediate returns, indeed may never provide a dramatic breakthrough. These conclusions, informed by the experience of leading researchers, will, we trust, be of assistance to funding agencies and policy-

making bodies, offering both diagnoses of existing problems and concrete, constructive suggestions for future change.

Looking to the future, the implications of austerity, which shadow the contributions in varying ways, are at their most worrying in the context of our early-career researchers. Previous publications by the Royal Irish Academy such as *The Appropriateness of Key Performance Indicators to Research in Arts and Humanities Disciplines* (RIA, 2010) or *Advancing Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Ireland* (RIA, 2007) have played an important role, particularly in clarifying for postgraduate and postdoctoral students the professional expectations and relative standing of various research outputs within their discipline. Some of the contributors highlight, however, the need for greater clarity for early-career researchers within the Irish university system, and for more structured frameworks of employment and career progression. The relative scarcity of initiatives to support graduates in pursuing alternative careers outside of academia is regrettable, at a time when traditional career options have narrowed, and when the willingness of young colleagues to engage creatively and imaginatively with new modes of inquiry is richly evident.

In 2008, the Humanities Serving Irish Society consortium was formed. Through its agency successful bids were made under the Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions, Cycles 4 and 5. Its results include three major collaborative projects, the Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO), the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) and the Digital Arts and Humanities PhD programme, offered across several universities, as well as many influential institutional projects. In its five years of existence HSIS demonstrated the level of success that the humanities could achieve when a national platform was formed and we are pleased to publish this paper under its auspices to illustrate further the results of the PRTL 4 funding programme. Its successor body, the Irish Humanities Alliance (IHA), formed in March 2013, while working in a more difficult funding environment, has a crucial role to play in advocating for the humanities, and in particular, in finding the most appropriate and adaptive strategy for communicating the value of the work done in humanities in Ireland. The IHA will be strengthened by association with the numerous humanities alliances and platforms which have been formed worldwide in the last decade, several of which are referenced in this volume and within which Irish academics play an increasingly important international role; we look forward to its development as a key advocacy body.

To conclude, a publication such as this is inevitably only a partial snapshot of the rich range of subjects and disciplines which constitute the humanities in Ireland. We hope that its contents will encourage other colleagues to continue this work of advocacy and public statement of the humanities and their value.

Acknowledgements

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Archives and society: the 1911 census and social change

Catriona Crowe
National Archives of Ireland

Most people think archives are dusty, complicated, difficult documents, which require professional training as a historian to understand. And some are. But most archives tell stories about people just like us, who leave traces behind them in records, either deliberately or unintentionally. The census of 1911 is a prime example of an archival resource, full of personal stories, left to us to explore a hundred years later, and with meaning far beyond the intentions underlying its original creation.

Censuses are as old as organized human society. Most of us born Christian will remember the bible story of Herod's census of Palestine. Knowing how many people you rule, or can get taxes from, or persecute, or plan schools, transport and hospitals for, is essential to any government, whether benign or malevolent, for the running of its affairs. Ireland began to have proper, country-wide censuses in 1821, and they took place at ten-yearly intervals thereafter. Due to cultural vandalism and bureaucratic stupidity, two curses of which we are still not free, we lost all of them from 1821 to 1891. The first full surviving census records for Ireland are those for 1901 and 1911.

We decided to digitize them some years ago when there was money to be got for such projects. The website has been incredibly popular, reaching 15 million unique visitors and receiving 750 million hits so far. Almost everyone is interested in their ancestors, some for reasons of self-aggrandizement (Look how posh my family was!), some to answer difficult questions (What became of my grandfather's first wife?), most from natural curiosity (Who were they? Am I like them? What connections exist between us?).

The Irish census website is free to access, something we in the National Archives feel very passionately should be the case. In Ireland, we have destroyed a great deal of our cultural heritage, some of it through war and revolution, some through colonial attrition, and some through wilful ignorance. The least we can do now is use the wonderful tool which is the internet, to make what remains freely available to our own citizens, and to our extensive, 70 million strong diaspora, many of whom were forced to leave the country due to economic recession at best and catastrophic famine at worst.

Because the site is free, you can look up your own ancestors, but also everybody else's too. You can gratify your vulgar curiosity as to what the neighbours were up to; you can look at whole streets and townlands and get a vivid picture of what they were like. You can find people staying with relatives and try to work out why – holiday, fosterage, education, employment, kidnapping? You can search for particular occupations, nationalities and religions in particular places. How many Methodist butchers were there in Cork? How many French governesses in Dublin? How many Plymouth Brethren in Rathmines? The answer to the last question, by the way, is 18. Hours of harmless and instructive fun.

However, one of the most interesting side-effects of the census going online has been a new attitude to ancestral poverty. The truth is that most Irish people come from fairly humble backgrounds originally – city dwellers from tenements and artisan dwellings, rural dwellers from labourers' cottages. While the Land Acts sorted out ownership issues for most rural families by transferring ownership from landlord to tenant in a relatively short time at the beginning of the twentieth century, urban dwellers had no such recourse.

In 1911, Dublin had one of the worst slums in Europe: 26,000 families lived in tenement houses, 20,000 of them in single rooms. Mortality rates were 22.3 per thousand; in London they were just 15.6. TB, diphtheria, gastroenteritis, scarlet fever, cholera and typhoid were all killers. Child mortality was extremely high. Life was a real struggle for people in these conditions; many were out of work, and the pawnshop and the pub were frequent haunts to raise money and to spend it. Women had to bear the brunt of running households in draughty, high-ceilinged rooms, where water for washing and cooking had to be carried daily, often up several flights of stairs. O'Casey's three great plays give the flavour of how life was lived in the deteriorated habitations of the aristocracy, who had fled to London and elsewhere after the Act of Union.

Many people were ashamed of having come from the tenements. Upward social mobility, emigration, interclass marriage, and Ireland's dysfunctional relationship with poverty all had an effect on how people saw their pasts, and mostly the effect was to encourage amnesia. With the release of the census online, possibly in some part to do with our little moment of increased, if false, prosperity, curiosity overcame shame, and the descendants of tenement dwellers went in search of their forebears. One of my colleagues told me he cried when he found his great-grandmother recorded in a house in Henrietta Street with many children; he had never been able to find her before because he didn't know where she lived.

This experience was repeated countless times. Many people would talk to me after public events on the census and tell me the stories of their families, who lived in pretty awful conditions, but survived and reared their children. Pride in survival skills began to replace shame due to poverty. The heroic qualities of people who lived through some of the most turbulent years in Irish history began to be apparent. The determination to build a mass trade union movement, much of it spearheaded by tenement dwellers, by carters, dockers and labourers, and later by women employed in confectionery and textiles, began to be seen for what it was: an organized attempt by intelligent, desperate people, fired by a passionate sense of injustice, to improve life for themselves, their families and their communities.

Here are some examples of what people found when they went looking. Anyone searching for family in Buckingham Street, off Amiens Street in the North Inner City, home to some of the most overcrowded housing in Europe, would have seen, from the final page of the first statistical form, that its 16 inhabited houses held 499 people in all, and that the vast majority of them were Catholic, with only 27 members of the Church of Ireland.

The next statistical form for the street would show them the numbers of people living in each house, and in each room in each house. In Number 13, for instance, 49 people lived in 9 rooms, all except one family in single rooms, ranging in number from 3 to 9. Moving on to the family return for the Dixon family they would find George and Marjorie with their 5 children, ranging in age from 24 to 10, and a nurse child, Thomas Power, one year old. Four members of the household are employed, father and son as bricklayers, two of the daughters as laundresses, so there must have been a reasonable income for the upkeep of the family. But the really sad piece of information here is Marjorie's child mortality experience: only 6 of her 13 children survive.

This household challenges so many of our modern ideas of privacy, comfort, sexuality, personal space, and most particularly, how to cope with loss of children and siblings on this scale. How did parental affection work in such circumstances, when a child could be snatched away by diphtheria or scarlet fever so suddenly? Knowing this type of experience from the inside is incredibly hard, and we have to rely on memoir and fiction to enlighten us, from people like Noel Browne, Frank McCourt and Paul Smith.

The census form for another household shows us even more sadly what these losses meant. Lucy McNamara, living next door to the Dixons in Number 13, with her husband and 7 children, had, by the age of 30, lost 2 of the 9 children born to her. Poor Lucy put them into the census return, with their ages when they died: Bernard, 5, and Josephine, 7 months. The policeman who collected the form tried to scratch out their names, writing 'Error: dead' in the margin, but because of Lucy's attempt to commemorate them, we know their names, and something of her anguish.

We can gain a visual sense of their world from a photograph taken two years later (Fig. 1), from the 'Darkest Dublin' collection of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, showing the gaunt tenements of Tyrone Street, now Sean McDermott Street, backing on to North Cumberland Street, and a collection of city dwellers, some of them barefoot, looking at us, probably the only photograph taken of most of them. The next image (Fig. 2) is the interior of a tenement house in Francis Street in the Liberties, showing typical living conditions in one-roomed dwellings. Note the two children.

That brief excursion into Buckingham Street gives you a flavour of what rich material for understanding human beings under pressure can be found in the census and indeed in other archives. It is impossible to contemplate these households without feeling compassion for, and curiosity about their occupants. And this is what led TV3 to commission from Big Mountain Productions a four-part series, *The Tenements*, which was transmitted in the summer of 2011, and attracted record viewing figures (c. 280,000 per show) during a time of traditionally low viewing. The show was inspired by the 1911 census and tried to recreate conditions in Henrietta Street at that time, with a wonderful family, the Winstons, who had actually lived in one of those extraordinary houses until the early 1970s.

Suddenly everyone was talking about Dublin tenements. I was having my roof repaired at the time the show went out, and the three guys working on it, all Dubs, were



Fig. 1. Tyrone Street, backing onto North Cumberland Street, in 1913 (RSAI, 'Darkest Dublin' Collection).
Reproduced by permission of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland ©.



Fig. 2. Interior of a tenement house, Francis Street, Dublin (RSAI, 'Darkest Dublin' Collection).
Reproduced by permission of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland ©.

waiting for me on the morning after the first programme, in which I had appeared. They had all grown up in tenement houses, but had never talked about it. There, in my street, we held an impromptu workshop on tenement Dublin, as they discovered that they were experts in a field now of great interest to everyone else. And they were suddenly proud, not ashamed.

Archives can change social attitudes. The late Mary Raftery used archives to change Irish attitudes about industrial schools and child sexual abuse, and directly influenced the Ryan Commission. The discovery of files relating to the adoption of Irish children in America led to a national debate about identity rights which resulted in a contact register for separated parents and children. And I am hopeful that the 1911 census has changed people's attitudes towards poverty in the past, and that that may change attitudes about poverty in the present.

Archives can also make you laugh. Take, for example, the census form filled out by the Cullen family, living in a tenement house in Blessington Street, also in the North Inner City, but more comfortable than Buckingham Street. Robert Cullen, a porter, and his industrious family live in 3 rooms in a house shared with 4 other families. He has 5 children living with him, and a visiting married daughter with *her* baby daughter. The children are well employed: a seamstress, a typist, a junior clerk and an apprentice bookbinder. But there is one other member of the household, on the bottom line: "Tatters Cullen, relationship to head of family: Dog. 3 years old, cannot read, born in Co. Longford".

Anthropocene Humanities

Poul Holm

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The future of the planet is determined by our actions, our behaviour as consumers and as citizens. All the individual choices we make sum up to a behavioural aggregate, which is bad for the planet and bad for ourselves. Global changes are known – we can measure and discuss the significance of differences of degrees of warming, weather patterns and water rise, but the big challenges are known. What we do not know is how we may change direction. How can research help us survive as a species? Enlightenment is not enough. It is extremely difficult for humans to change behaviour, even though we know the negative consequences of unchanged behaviour, just think of tobacco smoking, HIV, or CO₂ load.

The challenge is without a doubt the most complicated the human species has ever encountered in terms of human cognition. We have successfully adapted as a species to environmental change in the past, when forces of nature were beyond our control. We have also successfully survived the threat of nuclear warfare when we invented the means of our own destruction. But will we be able to address the challenges of repetitive behaviour when all our incentive structures go against such change? Here is a vast agenda for the humanities as we are concerned with human motivation, ideas, thought processes and human action.

But have the humanities ever changed anything? Yes, I would maintain that the humanities have been central to articulating and determining long-term human behaviour, certainly since Socrates. Consider this one example of the role of the humanities during the Cold War. The world of the 1950s and 1960s was dominated by a belief in social engineering both in democratic and communist systems. The Cold War period was convinced of the possibilities of social planning as a result of the cognitive breakthrough achieved by the quantitative social sciences, such as sociology and economics. Still, it was beyond comparison a humanities thought product that helped to define and defend the western world during this time, the philosopher Karl Popper's 1945 study of the Open Society and his uncompromising defence of democracy at a time when totalitarian thinking was in sharp focus. Popper's philosophy had a take-up, the extent of which we can hardly fathom today, because it so radically came to define Western thought and behaviour during the Cold War. In a sense it is still with us today, perhaps most clearly evidenced by the United Nations 17th Conference of the Parties (COP 17) on Climate Change in Durban, South Africa, in late 2011. The clash between the liberal thinking of western countries and the perspective of the newly affluent BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) was evidence that we need a new kind of thinking, which I would call Anthropocene Humanities, to overcome the differences and create a new consensus for living with environmental change.

But can the humanities even talk to environmental science? Do we share a common idea of the quest for truth or are we two cultures that remain fundamentally alien to each other?

I believe that the humanities produce findings like all other sciences. Findings come in many forms. It is a humanities finding that children's reading abilities are positively influenced by parents reading aloud to them. The finding is a result of researchers comparing parents' practices and school children's linguistic abilities in several countries, and combining statistical figures with theories of learning.

There is always an interpretation involved in a discovery, whether of a cultural marker or a cell membrane. The archaeologist identifies changes in soil layer as denoting a king's stronghold only when combining knowledge of building construction, dating and typologies with theories about past societies.

It is important to recognize that the humanities may produce findings because this enables us not only to criticize the world but to help create a better one.

Some colleagues argue that the role of the humanities is not to contribute to the construction of the world, but rather that our role is to be a critical voice against established notions. They will leave it to natural and engineering sciences to describe and construct the world, and will instead take the position of critics: while the natural sciences' role is to lay brick upon brick of the scientific building, it is the humanistic role to demolish the building. The postmodern historian Ankersmit says squarely that the historian is not committed to the truth, but solely to narrative power.

It is a radical position, which I reject. We cannot renounce the reference to reality and truth without giving up our academic position. But I do recognize that post-modern thinkers have played a positive role by demolishing positivist innocence and naivety. In the twenty-first century our thinking is characterized by design rather than tradition; we are no longer so much preoccupied with how the world is, but with how we can create something entirely new and unbound. The linguistic turn was therefore one of the humanistic world's most important discoveries in the last generation. The problem is that the humanities in the postmodernist interpretation may turn entirely self-reflecting. Research may be a question only of how I choose to look at the world, how the world is reflected in me, or how I can look deeper into myself.

Instead of just being critical of this development of the humanities and harking back to positivist epistemology, we must recognize that there is no turning back. Humans have no other tool than language to comprehend the reality that is around us. The only thing we have as researchers are sensations and perceptions, empirical data and models, whether we are researching nanoparticles or dance. In this way both science and the humanities have taken the linguistic turn.

In positive terms, we may talk of Global Change Research as a University Challenge which increasingly is stimulating universities to change. The overarching challenge is to build radically interdisciplinary research environments because:

- complex problems increase the need to muster all relevant knowledge bases;
- knowledge growth is made so much greater by adding another discipline rather than by adding more resources to a discipline which is already engaged.

Figure 1 is a graphical illustration of the change that needs to happen to move from disciplinary siloes to a Radically Inter- and Transdisciplinary Environment (RITE). In the traditional university, disciplinary knowledge production is based on a division of labour along faculty and disciplinary divides. Central shared facilities are typically restricted to library and administrative functions. Disciplines need to be converging, and indeed increasingly are, blending data and information across institutional divides. Shared facilities are increasingly collaborative, devolved, and scalable based on a digital platform. The success of the university as a producer of knowledge depends on its ability to develop the RITE supporting infrastructure, education and research training mechanisms.⁶

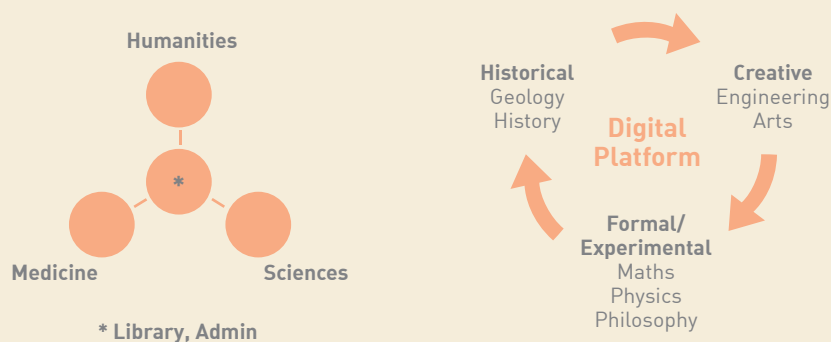


Fig. 1. From siloes to RITE (from Holm et al., art.cit.). Reproduced by permission of Elsevier Press.

The RITE framework prescribes that natural, technical, social, and human sciences should be integrated from day one. None of these sciences should be hegemonic: in other words it is important that no one science or discipline maintains a prerogative when developing a research programme. In particular it is important that Anthropocene Humanities be allowed to identify research priorities which are aligned with fundamental research questions within home disciplines in order to develop as a research field at the cutting edge.

To understand and cope with global change we need to harness all fields of human knowledge (Fig. 2). Scientific division of labour means that knowledge is compartmentalized in different reference systems but the challenges of sustainability, impacts, resilience, vulnerability, adaptation, mitigation are best accomplished via dialogue across reference systems.

⁶ Poul Holm, Michael Goodsite, Sierd Cloetingh, et al., 'Collaboration between the natural, social and human sciences in Global Change Research', *Environmental Science & Policy*, 28 (April 2013), 25-35, <http://dx.doi.org.elib.tcd.ie/10.1016/j.envsci.2012.11.010>.

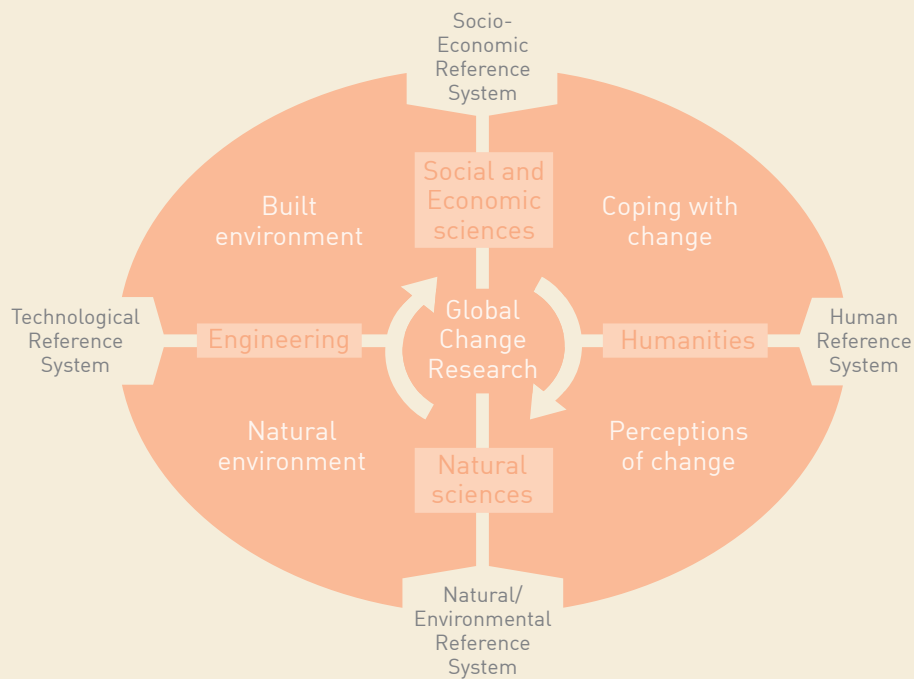


Fig. 2. Harnessing disciplines (from Holm et al., art.cit.). Reproduced by permission of Elsevier Press.

Anthropocene Humanities must help us understand how and why we choose to act as we do. The RITE framework would take us beyond rational choice theory and behavioural decision theory towards understanding

- different attitudes towards nature, technology, and risk
- different conceptualizations of time and differential discounting of future outcomes
- different strategies for arriving at ‘rational’ decisions
- different rates of pro-social behaviour in common-property resource dilemmas

Research in environmental history is obviously relevant in this regard, but many other humanities disciplines can make important contributions. There is a need for research on narratives and language, a need to rethink philosophical and ethical questions about the commitment of living generations to future generations, a need for studies of climate representations, and so on.

An agenda for Anthropocene Humanities must enhance and intensify work on how social and cultural directionality could be articulated, democratically anchored, and implemented in the search for new technologies, medical knowledge, economic paradigms, and forms of social organization. The agenda must also encourage a dialogue with non-Western modes of developmental thought. It is a big agenda, and we need to draw on all the diversity of the human experience to meet the challenge.

The 'Value' in the 'Public Value of the Humanities': a UK perspective

Francis O'Gorman
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The question of the public value of the humanities has risen in the UK to new prominence with high speed. And rather than providing an opportunity for scholars to talk about the values of the arts and humanities, the topic is now fraught with unhappy politics. It is plagued by emotive and poorly understood terms, including 'elitism' and 'democracy'. It is plagued, too, by the problem of scholars acceding too readily to politicians' comprehension of the 'public value of the humanities'. This peculiar situation is the result of a crude mutation of the question 'what is the value of the humanities to the public?' into 'what will individuals/groups pay for the humanities?' or even: 'the only humanities that have value are ones that individuals/groups will pay for'.

The privileged sense of 'value' is financial. UK academics are encouraged to assess how we can make money from what we do: grant income, uncapped student markets (international students and PhDs), outreach and commercial activity; 'impact'. Certainly, we have 'impact' categories for applications for external funding and, in the Research Evaluation Framework (REF 2014), 'impact' is a significant category of assessment (20 per cent of the total). REF defines impact as 'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'.⁷ A significant portion of research funding, that is to say, will be targeted in the UK after REF at those whose work has been judged to have had demonstrable consequences on, among other things, the economy. It remains to be seen how 'effect on, change or benefit to [...] society, culture or quality of life' can be quantitatively assessed. But it does not remain to be seen how quickly many in the humanities believe they should transform themselves and their disciplines to answer these new government requirements for what happens in universities, and how value can be demonstrably quantified.

Are there any worrying motivations behind the rapid embrace of some new subject areas? In English departments in the UK, for instance, we have seen the remarkable development of medical humanities; digital humanities; eco-humanities; and more generally 'the new humanities'. Much work here is valuable and important. Much is actually long-standing and distinguished. But the merely strategic embrace of such developments, the ones without intellectual integrity, play into government-led notions that distort value, threaten the intellectual integrity that is the foundation of rigorous thought, and risk substituting what is fundable for what is of quality.

⁷ <http://www.ref.ac.uk/media/ref/content/pub/assessmentframeworkandguidanceconsubmissions/GOS%20including%20addendum.pdf>, 3.3.140, accessed 21 March 2013.

Thanks to Katherine Mullin, Andrew Thompson and Jane Wright for discussions on this topic.

What is 'fundable' has become accepted with astonishing rapidity as a proxy for quality. The importance of a research activity in the humanities is now increasingly judged, not least for promotion purposes, in terms of money generated. Humanities scholarship is being changed through privatization and market-ization. But has the academy *really* found a new faith in the notion that the market creates value? Or has all this happened too quickly for the academy to know what it thinks? There is no doubt, though, how readily some university managers have accepted the terms of the market with hardly a protest. And some really do think that fundability and excellence are the same thing.

Within the UK, the privatization of the humanities has to be set in the broader context of the decision to privatize Higher Education itself, by withdrawing national funding from teaching except in the form of student loans. To the question 'what is the value of the humanities' in many a UK university there is now a straightforward answer: £9000 a year. A faith in the market as the guarantor of quality has been diversely launched into HE. Many may believe but none can *know* what will happen.

One of the most striking weaknesses in the defence of the humanities is, I think, academics ourselves. The relevance of the truism that academics will do anything for money is indeed apt. Consider the apparent readiness of UK humanities scholars to embrace radical changes in the nature of their intellectual endeavours – 'impact' in REF being merely one – simply with grumbling. We need a better body to represent us locally and in Europe. But academics in the humanities must make it clearer that they care about the humanities themselves.

Often enough we take up intellectual activities that suggest we are trying to get away from the humanities. And as a profession we waste far too much time on things that are not the humanities. We fill in forms; we struggle with some new piece of poorly-designed software; we pursue often ill-fated collaborative schemes to chase grants that we hardly stand a chance of getting; we undertake tasks (like careers advice and counselling, employability sessions and public outreach events) for which we have little or no aptitude or knowledge; we pursue initiatives that are temporary. And we spend *far too much time in meetings*. No one in the medical profession can understand why academics spend so many hours each day sitting around talking to each other. It gives the impression that we think our work is not important. It gives the impression that work is a spare-time activity.

At one level the problem we as humanities scholars are having is with that age-old mythic terror, the fear of the serpent: the serpent that brings knowledge into innocence. We are always wrestling with that terror, whether it is within the university or without. We will not overcome it. But we need to be more confident in our own beliefs in what we do, all the same. Studying the humanities is a more-than legitimate activity; the aesthetic is a more-than wholly acceptable object for rigorous and attentive study. We should not be embarrassed to admit that, like practitioners of every other advanced discipline, we need to talk to each other, however much we talk to those outside the academy. It is a troubling metamorphosis of the notion of value that something as precious as the

humanities should now, once again, risk being measured primarily by what money it can make. Recasting the essence of the humanities and of a national education system, the UK academy seems bizarrely ready to transform itself overnight with merely a mild protest. Money matters. I like my salary as much as anyone. But the oldest of human wisdom reminds us of exactly what happens when we put money *first*.

Environmental Humanities in the Anthropocene era

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Research into human experience increases our understanding of the world. In this Anthropocene era, as the extent of human impact on the earth's ecosystems becomes clear, the humanities must lead the way in rethinking human responsibility for a global future. Now our concern with human achievements extends to their consequences; we must consider not how culture evolves, but how it can be deliberately shaped to support the diverse collectivity of more-than-human life. As well as exploring this collective experience, the humanities must turn increasingly to critical self-reflection as a necessary precursor to ethical action: 'we must regenerate ourselves if we are to regenerate the earth,' writes Australian poet Judith Wright, 'our feelings and emotions must be engaged, and engaged on a large scale.'⁸

Reflective engagement with more-than-human environments forms the basis of the eco-humanities, but to this broad aim may be added three further areas that are of growing importance for those working in the field. The first of these is the built environment – especially city spaces, where complexity and speed of change have a profound effect on the formation of non-human ecologies. The second, and related, area is that of social justice, which addresses the position of marginalized human subjects whose traditional relationship with place and resources is distorted by corporate globalization. Thirdly, bioethical questions emerge; these concern the ways in which the sciences intervene in the lives of particular human and non-human subjects. The concept of 'ecology without nature' suggests we need to rethink our definitions of 'nature' completely in order to overcome problematic conceptualizations of power.

This changing relationship with our non-human others creates opportunities and challenges for the environmental humanities. Ecological perspectives offer new ways of talking about identity; an emphasis on geopolitical formations facilitates work across national boundaries and helps to secure international funding. This breadth of inclusivity also opens the way towards a more connective view of the humanities – one that moves away from the 'territories' of subjects and disciplines. This is very much in the spirit of ecological approaches, which emphasize webs of meaning and collective responsibilities, as well as the important effects of particular actions globally. Conversely, though, it is this very inclusivity that can, initially at least, erect barriers to research. Many scholars working in areas such as heritage and the built environment, gender and queer theory, or migrant studies, may not perceive themselves as engaging in environmental criticism. In many ways, then, ecocriticism is a form of consciousness, as well as a specific scholarly activity.

⁸ Judith Wright, *Because I was invited* (Melbourne: OUP, 1975), p. 206.

So, one of the key determinants in the future of eco-humanities is, quite simply, raising the profile of environmental concerns, and finding ways of foregrounding these across a range of disciplines. My own field, English literature, engages with ecocritical debates in ways that shed light on the larger dynamics of the humanities as a field. In literary ecocriticism the US is the most prominent, though by no means the only significant, participant. ASLE – the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment – was founded there in 1992, but Scott Slovic, a former editor of its journal, has commented on the range of submissions received, from places as far-flung as Australia, Mexico, Malta and Nigeria. In 1999 the Modern Language Association held a major forum examining the progress of this field and debating its various aspects across the study of language and literature.

At American universities, interdisciplinary courses are prevalent, especially at Masters level, and posts are advertised with versatility of discipline required. These patterns are just now beginning to materialize in British universities and are generally driven by existing staff with expertise in the area. For example, a study commissioned by the English Subject Centre outlined the ways in which environmental sustainability would extend debates within English Studies, and further, explored productive links between this subject and others, such as philosophy, cultural studies, creative and performance studies and the social sciences. Currently ecocritical modules are offered at both undergraduate and Masters level at Bath Spa University, Liverpool John Moores University, the University of Exeter and Manchester Metropolitan University. Other institutions, such as the University of Central England, Lincoln University and Warwick University offer undergraduate modules in the field. The UK branch of ASLE was founded in response to the developing interest of those working at British institutions, but it was not until 2010 that Ireland was officially added to the title of this organization, in recognition of the growing importance of ecocritical engagement in Ireland and by scholars focusing on Irish materials. The founding of the Irish Environmental History Network in 2008 was just one indicator of the importance of interdisciplinary work in keeping the eco-humanities evolving in fruitful ways and offering opportunities to those who wish to work collaboratively.

The topical and legislative importance of environmental issues means that the eco-humanities often look to the future for materials with which to work. Environmental humanities in the US are dominated by American contexts and materials, and by modern and contemporary literature and cultural productions. In this sense the intellectual focus is on change itself: thematically and in their own procedures the eco-humanities are inherently focused on the future and on active engagement with the terms by which this future can be measured. This is not to say that histories and earlier periods of cultural and literary development play no role in the debates, but these are in the minority in terms of conference presentations and published articles. The interdisciplinary aspects of the field are also especially inclusive of performance and creative arts, and scholarly activity also intersects with these aspects in fruitful ways. This means that styles of criticism and

outputs vary from standard approaches. This is especially obvious in literary study where scholarly writing may now draw on experiential material within its argument. A number of British writers engaging with the field do so through a mixture of creative modes, including personal essays and lectures. These strategies inevitably draw attention to the importance of the experiencing subject and of identity politics across a range of fields.

As well as these shifts in style, modes of dissemination are also under revision as a result of ecological perspectives emerging within the broader field of the humanities. Sustainability makes traditional conference modes increasingly unsuitable. Candidates from developing countries find costs prohibitive and transport arrangements are counter-intuitive for delegates in this field. New modes of dissemination are preferred, such as podcasts and simulcasts. The currency of debate also suggests the importance of ongoing engagement with key topics and the adoption of interim dissemination measures such as working papers or position documents. Project Bamboo was inaugurated in 2010 with the specific aim of fostering collaboration in humanities research through the use of new technologies. The emphasis of this initiative was on supporting research through the development of a network of digital resources, offering academics, librarians and technologists an opportunity to collaborate in building sustainable archives to be shared across disciplinary and cultural boundaries. Over 600 people from 114 institutions and organizations took part in a series of workshops and online conversations in the course of the project, which was driven by a consortium of ten universities – eight American, one Australian and one British.⁹ Project Bamboo situates technological development in a context of sustainability, revealing how modes of research in the humanities generally are shaped implicitly by environmental concerns. Such initiatives demonstrate the unquestionable importance of ecological issues for the humanities of the future.

⁹ For further information see <http://www.projectbamboo.org/>.

Digital Humanities: interdisciplinary reflections, challenges and opportunities

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I. Digital Humanities: merging or emerging?

What we mean by the term – or nominalized pair – ‘digital humanities’ can be difficult to tie down; from the outset it is worth acknowledging that it would be impossible to identify a single or individual type of researcher who fully embodies what digital humanities is/are. Figure 1 seeks to capture that diversity of opinion (after Alex Reid). The top left model expresses a view where humanities and digital methods are mostly separate and one could say that the digital humanities is the (small) area of intersection. In another view, the digital context is firmly embedded in and is bounded by the humanities, i.e. projects which are predominantly humanities-based but with a digital ‘bit’. Conversely in the third (bottom left) model, where humanities is firmly embedded in or bounded by the digital, would be situated the software engineer who looks at digital humanities as just another use case, not necessarily special or distinctive. And finally there is a fourth view – in what Reid terms the ‘not-Venn’ diagram – where the digital humanities is a fused entity. As Reid observes, it is a diagram that says two things:

1. *Not* that all humanists must study the digital, *but* that all humanistic study is mediated by digital technologies (and that we do not fully understand the implications of that).
2. *Not* that the digital world is solely the province of the humanities or that only the humanities have something useful to say about it, *but* that through a realist ontology we can extend humanistic investigation into the profoundly non-human world of digital objects.¹⁰

In other words, not all humanists must study the digital but all humanistic studies are mediated by its technologies. If you are *doing* humanities *now* you are *doing* digital humanities.

¹⁰ Alex Reid, ‘Digital Humanities: two Venn diagrams’ (10 March 2011), <http://www.alex-reid.net/>, accessed 20 April 2012.

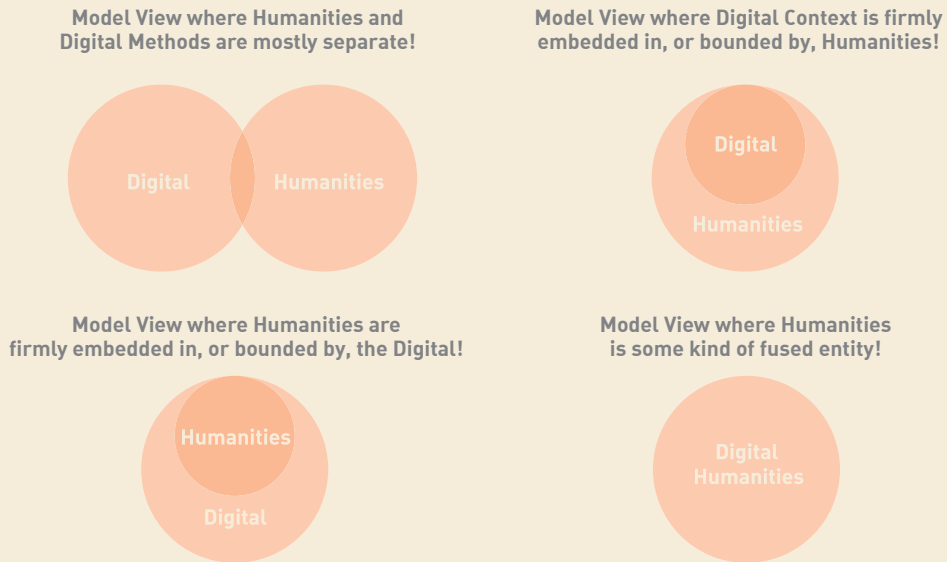


Fig. 1: Digital Humanities: merging or emerging?

Our continuing need to employ ‘digital’ not as noun but as qualifying adjective is worth reflecting upon: if the next thing in computing is quantum, are we going to be talking about quantum humanities in twenty or thirty years’ time? Why were we never talking about ‘the hammer and chisel’ humanities or print humanities before this? Of course one cannot separate the medium from the message, nor humans’ engagement with the medium and the tools. Figure 1 could be interpreted from a digital methods perspective; try interpreting it from a digital context perspective also. Note, for example, the different usage context of the words ‘humanities’ and ‘digital’; all reflecting digital humanities being some thing, or some activity depending on the practitioner or commentator.

Our perspectives on digital humanities – and our opportunities for funding – are inherently complicated, if also enriched, by this difficulty in tying down a shared understanding. The work of Willard McCarty continues to be immensely helpful in facilitating our understanding of digital humanities as a process. Writing in the *Humanist* in 2011, he recalls ‘an argument Brian Cantwell Smith made some years ago, that paying attention to the digital means by which something is done or produced is not important any longer, except perhaps for a small minority of specialists. The analogy he drew, as I recall ... was to music as it is recorded and played back – digitally, but who cares?’ McCarty goes on to offer another observation on this question:

Let me propose for further discussion the following: that in the modelling of cultural artefacts for analytical purposes, the fact that these artefacts are represented digitally remains central to analytical purposes, the fact that these artefacts are represented digitally remains central to the scholarship, since it is in the comparison

of results from digital representation and processing that new things arise. But in simulating these artefacts, the fact that they are represented digitally is irrelevant. And that is why modelling (participial, not nominal) is central to the digital humanities as a field of its own.¹¹

Thus what is of significance is the model, the process and the engagement which it produces. Our reflections on such processes and our reflections on the impact of our work are especially significant at this moment. Sometimes digital humanities is about the ‘thing’ (a digital critical edition, for example) and sometimes it is about the process associated with making the thing. Sometimes it is about how the process associated with making the thing may be used in another process or in relationship with another thing.

The following model from Scandinavian activity theory (Fig. 2) is especially useful for digital humanities, underlying its basic character as a human activity and offering a means to evaluate its different dimensions.¹² Using this perspective, digital humanities may be viewed, at a fundamental level, as a collection of praxes, or some specific form of human activity. In this theory, a subject’s engagement and interaction with their environment results in the production of tools. Essentially exteriorized forms of mental processes are manifested in accessible and communicable tools that are useful for social interaction, i.e. subjects having an objective use tools to produce some outcome. Activity is inherently social and subject to cultural and technical mediation (rules, etc.). From a Digital Humanities perspective, it describes the products of our research, the practices in context, and their interrelationships.

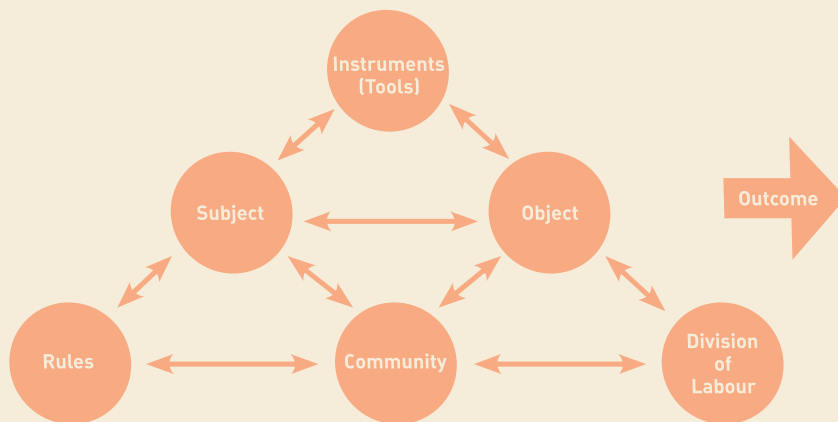


Figure 2: Digital Humanities may be theorized using Activity Theory

¹¹ Willard McCarty, *Humanist*, 25:308 (2011), <http://lists.digitalhumanities.org/pipermail/humanist/2011-September/002451.html>, accessed 20 April 2012.

¹² See Yrjö Engeström, Reijo Miettinen, Raija-Leena Punamäki (eds), *Perspectives on Activity Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

II. Infrastructure challenges: cool DH projects and infrastructures

The identification of (Digital) Humanities projects as suitable for or worthy of funding can pose particular challenges. Are such projects to be evaluated as excellent scholarly endeavours because they are (a) excellent humanities projects (which may or may not specifically name digital components); or (b) ‘cool’ exemplar projects using ‘cool’ technologies appended to, even bolted on to, a humanities project; or (c) a ‘disruptive technology’ project using a new device to further or extend a traditional humanities activity; or (d) a framework project where the major effort is in establishing the framework but without any as yet discernable insight or benefit for humanities scholarship?

It is especially necessary that we produce more considered and credible arguments that can attest to our having generalized solutions for classes of problems requiring solutions. In Digital Humanities one sees lots of solutions looking for problems; sometimes the problem doesn’t even know it needs a ‘solution’! A more substantial delineation of ‘solutions’ requires the identification of three cases: processes (methodologies), things (tools) and their interactions (activities).

At this moment, individuals can feel bombarded with frameworks for digital humanities both nationally and internationally. Do we need any or all of them to advance humanities scholarship? Can an individual researcher still ‘do’ digital humanities without ‘buying in’ to the frameworks, consortia and standards organizations? So many of these now exist that one has to consider if their value is resultantly diminished. Relatedly we need to consider the challenges related to market control: who controls the metadata formats, and why? Who controls the standards, and why? What necessary frameworks and technologies are missing, and where is the scope and space for individual innovators, even rebels, within our existing organizational controls?

III. Digital Humanities for everyone: funding and IP challenges

Funding Digital Humanities is a difficult challenge, and yet a wonderful opportunity for invigorating humanities scholarship. A close relationship exists between funders and frameworks, as observed by other contributors to this publication. In recent years some funding agencies have asked reviewers to provide a technical annexe to their grant application; however researchers, in completing such an annexe or in describing a methodology section, may focus on delivering what they think is expected rather than what is appropriate. A technical annexe is an excellent review instrument but it also carries the risk of separating the digital and humanities project components and diminishing the possibility of their cohesion.

Sustainable funding is arguably the most urgent issue for digital humanities projects. As researchers, the majority of the effort in securing sustainability funds

falls to the individual. It is imperative that funding agencies advocating infrastructure development for digital humanities (to include developing tools and associated usage processes) provide opportunities for competitive securement of a sustainability budget. Developments such as the Irish Research Council's Research Development Initiative offer particular opportunities in this regard, and considered value analyses are also crucial. It is inconceivable that a software company would consider halting funding of their products' maintenance immediately after release; yet an analogous position is faced by many highly significant digital humanities projects in Ireland currently.

In conclusion, all new digital things have a 'shelf life'. Thus funders need to be encouraged not to base their initial funding allocation exclusively on the longevity of a project deliverable. The digital humanities process itself, which includes the forging of new methods of interdisciplinary collaboration, is of value and deserving of support in order to produce scholarship of lasting significance for all of our disciplines.

Music Technology as an emerging discipline

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We might think of Music Technology as an emerging discipline in the Irish academic context, but in fact it is possible to argue that it has existed for centuries. This multi-disciplinary field is effectively an heir to the classic Quadrivium subject called *Music*, as it includes the study of acoustics in its core, as well as music theory in its mathematical and computational form. The subject is also associated with developments in many fields, such as mathematics, physics, psychology, cognitive sciences, engineering and computer science. Although we find it convenient to call our area Music Technology, we could just as well have called it *Music* without any further qualification.

Thus, Music and Music Technology have been for a long time important fields of study. In the modern Irish university, however, the reception of the discipline of music as a field of research has been mixed. In some cases, narrow views about the area have been expressed, limiting Music to musicology. As a consequence, its multi-disciplinary extensions have also suffered. But there has been enough evidence, internationally, of the importance of multifaceted research in Music to the academic and wider communities.

It might be perhaps useful to look at the origins of one of the fields of Music Technology research to see how, for instance, the relationship between music and the sciences can spark a very creative working environment. In 1957, Max Matthews spent time away from his main research concerns, in communications engineering, to make the first computer program that could synthesize music, thus creating the area of research we know as Computer Music.¹³ As his software developed, he realized that the only way for it to fulfil its potential was to get musicians and composers involved in the project. From the early 1960s onwards, he convinced his employers, the Bell Telephone Labs to provide research internships for composers to use and help develop his software. This enabled a variety of achievements, including the further development of digital audio technology (which is now ubiquitous), new musical instruments, discoveries on sound perception in humans, and of course, a lot of new music.

The environment at Bell Labs is but one of many examples where institutions showed enough vision to support great research work, which was music-based, music-motivated. This contrasts with the view, in certain quarters, that an area such as Music Technology is not as worthy as the ‘hard sciences’, on one side, or as the ‘classic’ disciplines of the humanities, on the other.

The area of Music Technology is slowly developing in Ireland. Many Higher

¹³ Max Matthews, ‘The digital computer as a musical instrument’, *Science*, 142:3592 (Nov. 1963), 553-7.

Education institutions are providing courses and infrastructure for some research to be carried out. However, we are still witnessing its infancy. Compared to other countries, such as our neighbours in the United Kingdom, the infrastructure is very limited. That is not to say that there is not a lot of international-quality research being pursued in Ireland. In fact, the Sound and Digital Music Technology group at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, in particular, can be given as one example in this regard. However, lack of capital investment limits the work we can do.

It also means that we cannot compete for international students, for instance with institutes based in the UK, and in Northern Ireland. We attract some very good people, but that is because they want specifically to work with us (and not due in particular to our research facilities). Overall, we do not have the numbers of researchers hosted by institutions in other countries. In addition, research funding from Irish bodies has been virtually non-existent. A rare opportunity was given to us in the form of the Digital Arts and Humanities programme funded by the HEA under the last Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLII 5), which thankfully has reached out to and embraced the subject of Music (as a field of Digital Arts).

Research in Music Technology (as in Music) has a variety of output forms, which range from traditional written work to software and hardware designs, to compositions and similar artistic objects. The less traditional modes are often misunderstood, and not very well known in the wider academic community. A 2011 document on the research indicators in the humanities produced by the Royal Irish Academy¹⁴ was a missed opportunity for markers to be firmly established for the area. In that document, any discussion of research in Music was limited to a subsection of its broad range of activities. Music Technology, in particular, was completely absent, as if it did not exist as a serious area of scholarship. In the future, it is important that we seize such opportunities as a means of educating academic institutions and funding bodies.

The recent creation of a national association to support Music Technology in all of its forms could help avoid such difficulties in the future. The Irish Sound and Science Technology Association (ISSTA) has been active in trying to gather support for the area. It has already promoted three annual conferences, and is organizing another one for this year. This association could play an important part in the advocacy of Music Technology not only as a legitimate field of research activity, but also as a multi-disciplinary area of professional work.

It is somehow ironic to observe that the inter-faculty, cross-disciplinary nature of our subject is sometimes seen with suspicion. There is a perception that if we want to attract support from a science-based body, the words 'research in Music' should not be used. On the other hand, if we are looking towards funding from the humanities, we

¹⁴ *The appropriateness of Key Research Indicators to research in Arts and Humanities disciplines* (Dublin, 2011: Royal Irish Academy).

should not mention programming, computers or technology. But, of course, it is at the intersection of all these fields that we stand, and the new knowledge generated by our area is not one that can be contemplated by isolated fields.

For a number of years, we have heard continued talk of the importance of cross-disciplinary ideas and projects. However, when faced with applications that truly cover various disciplines, funding bodies are unable to cope. Their structures are too deeply rooted in single-subject principles. For instance, review panels are often unprepared for the task of analyzing applications involving multiple disciplines, which is often reflected in inappropriate feedback to applicants.

For these reasons, looking towards the future, a number of challenges exist for the area, if it is to develop fully. For academic institutions, an understanding of what constitutes interdisciplinarity is required, and they must consider how to put structures in place to support it. Funding bodies should reform their structures, review the creation of panels, and look to international best practice. In particular, there is an opportunity here for the new Irish Research Council to create bridges between disciplines and truly promote work that encompasses more than one area of knowledge. This will not only benefit Music, and Music Technology, but various others emerging fields of research. It is crucial to be able to cement these areas nationally, so that Ireland can be placed on the worldwide map of cutting-edge research.

Research visibility and the ‘emergent’ practices of Creative Arts and Media

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In recent times, public debate and government policy has tended to emphasize the importance of scientists, mathematicians and engineers as drivers of innovation change. However, no discipline has the monopoly on innovation, and clearly artists and designers play a crucial role in shaping and changing our world. In contrast to engineering and scientific research institutions, the creative arts have not traditionally been thought of as important contributors to innovation and competitiveness, and yet without the contribution of the arts our lived experience would be far poorer. The convergence of the arts, sciences and technology and the development of sustainable enterprises (what has now been identified as the cultural economy) have recently been prioritized in government policy. Certainly, the increased emphasis on discourses of design innovation and application, as drivers of economic growth, has focused attention onto the potential of the creative arts and media sector.

However, research in the creative arts and media is not ‘emergent’ but longstanding, and I would argue, has too often been invisible within national research and funding priorities. Governmental and institutional priorities are increasingly focused on potential growth areas, and so ‘Creative Arts and Media’ (as a loose categorization of a large number of research practices and expertise) has come into sharper relief. The strengths and weaknesses of creative arts and media research are two sides of the same coin: the interdisciplinary, flexible nature of creative arts and media practice means that it often does not have a disciplinary home or base. Additionally, research in ‘Creative Arts and Media’ demands an understanding of theory and practice, but the inclusion of both practice-based research and a text-based humanities model within its research methodologies, often means that research outputs are poorly disseminated and understood within complementary disciplines.

What are some of the challenges for Creative Arts and Media funding and researchers?

1. Understanding the term ‘Creative Arts and Media’

The first challenge lies in the term itself; is it a useful descriptor of the range of practices, enquiries, application and scholarship that it seeks to include? One of the problems with the term ‘Creative Arts and Media’ is establishing what it means. How are the ‘creative’ arts distinct from the ‘arts’ or the ‘humanities’? Why is ‘media’ here and not elsewhere? What is the meaning of ‘media’ in this context; is it the form (the medium) or is it the

print and broadcast media as we commonly understand the term? What is the role and place of technology and technological applications to the creative arts? Applying existing definitions is not always helpful, as they tend to describe practices already in place: for example, performing arts, visual arts, and lens-based media, rather than emergent and evolving practices made possible by new convergences and technologies, for example, digital design, animation, and sonic arts to name a few.

‘Creative Arts and Media’ is a wide ranging and all-encompassing term, and given its nature, there is a clear imperative to set out a scholarly, professional and contextual framework which is legible across the third and fourth level sector. This is more difficult than it seems: for example ‘arts, creativity and cultural education’ is recognized differently in all four Dublin Universities, the four Dublin-based Institutes of Technology and NCAD. Creative Arts and Media seems, informally, to be understood as any study of a subject which does not fall neatly into the humanities or the science model and which may involve a practice of some kind: film-making, photography, design and so on. Yet this is one of the implicit biases to be found within the funding history of creative arts research. Today, Creative Arts and Media is increasingly an engagement with technology, to the extent that a more useful term is ‘Creative Arts and Technologies’ and one which is beginning to gain currency and visibility across the sector. This descriptor allows us to include, without struggling, animatronics, digital design, gaming, technologies of culture, design for social media, data visualization, music and audio technologies alongside more traditional ‘creative arts’ pursuits such as, for example, fine art, graphic design, and photography.

2. The need to interrogate ‘research’

The second challenge comes from understanding the nature of Creative Arts and Technologies research. The fluidity of disciplinary boundaries, the exciting possibility of collaboration and convergence, and the adaptation of theoretical and practice models from one domain to another, does not always produce research which is measurable and quantifiable. As Creative Arts and Technologies researchers take up lodgings within the margins of more established disciplines, for example, engineering or computer science, their research outputs may not meet a domain’s standard criteria. Work may be exhibited or broadcast or performed, instead of patented, or published. Often work created may be temporal (for example dance or theatre performance) and exists afterwards only in fragments or documents (for example as video footage, or photographs) if at all. How do we ‘measure’ dance? Additionally, the infrastructure for the dissemination and circulation of research findings and outputs in creative arts and technologies is often less formally proscribed than the journal/conference/patent model of scholarship. There is a need to develop new digital models for the dissemination of creative arts and technologies research.

Compiling a research audit a few years ago, I asked colleagues for their research outputs. Some were able to cite books written and edited, journal articles delivered,

conference papers presented: easily counted and quantified. Others did not respond, even though I knew they had written screenplays, directed documentary films, won international prizes in photography and animation, developed award-winning mobile apps, exhibited paintings internationally, designed theatre productions, illustrated books, and designed major films, all in addition to their teaching practice. Many were domain experts, advising industry and actively involved in pushing the conceptual boundaries of their practice.

It was clear many did not recognize what they were doing as having any research value. To some, research was something which appears in a book, while what they did was test, refine and articulate their creative ideas in real-world situations. Yet, the pedagogical value alone of these practices is incalculable, because new approaches, new ideas and new methodologies evolved through these practices are inevitably been folded back into teaching and learning. It is clear that communicating and identifying a broad spectrum of research practices as 'research' is important.

3. The status of 'practice'

However, the problem with 'research' does not only lie amongst creative practitioners; I suspect there is an implicit hierarchy of research value which lingers within the humanities. The question of 'practice-based' or 'practice-led' research does not trouble scientists as much as it does humanities scholars. When practice-based doctorates first began to be formalized within Ireland, there was an anxiety about how practice-led research could be assessed, despite well-established international guidelines. The suspicion of 'practice-led' research as not having the same intellectual capital as the 'pure' humanities is one I have heard used to demote the research capability of creative arts and technologies practitioners. In the sciences, testing ideas through processes of experiment, verification, negation, and modification is fundamental to research enquiry. Yet the notion of isolating chemistry as a 'practice-based' research model from other conceptual or theoretical research models seems absurd. This attitude towards creative arts research is less prevalent nowadays, but it draws attention to models of research which are best understood by funders, with creative arts and technologies research falling between funding bodies.

Conclusion

At a time of social and economic transition, the reliability of the traditional career pathway is less sure than ever. We are living in a globalized, precarious world. However, creative arts and creative technologies professionals are undaunted by change because they have always negotiated a less traditional path. They are used to freelance work, being mobile, adapting to new contexts, creating opportunities, working across disciplines and professions, spinning out new ideas, challenging old orthodoxies and thinking of new ways to do business. These are characteristics which are key to the national innovation infrastructure. The centrality of the arts to creating a national identity, building international relationships and creating cultural and economic capital is undoubted, but perhaps not sufficiently celebrated – especially in terms of the vital role creative arts and technologies play in our future.

Medical Humanities: new frontier or back to the past?

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In nomenclatural terms Medical Humanities is a relatively new discipline. Originating in the United States and Australia almost simultaneously, Medical Humanities is seen by many as a means of ‘making better doctors’ by adopting analytical and methodological strategies from the humanities and importing them into medical education. In the United States this remains its principal application and, as this definition from New York University’s School of Medicine suggests, it broadly encompasses the arts, humanities and social sciences:

We define the term ‘Medical Humanities’ broadly to include an interdisciplinary field of humanities (literature, philosophy, ethics, history and religion), social science (anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, sociology), and the arts (literature, theater, film, and visual arts) and their application to medical education and practice.¹⁵

Recent years have seen the discipline grow in Britain, where it has developed firmly along philosophical lines, with many of the key practitioners either based in, or drawn from, Departments of Philosophy. Notable examples include the Centre for Medical Humanities at Durham which has become a centre of excellence. There Medical Humanities is not simply seen as a ‘further humanities discipline’; instead it is viewed as ‘a field of enquiry’ with a particular emphasis on the ‘recognition that *subjective experience* can be a legitimate source of knowledge’.¹⁶

Progressive Medical Schools have adopted Medical Humanities as a major preparatory component of ‘work-based learning’.¹⁷ Apart from the desire to produce more rounded medical graduates by involving the humanities in their training, it is largely seen as a way of teaching empathy by developing cognitive awareness of the human condition. Several studies over the past twenty years are agreed that teaching humanistic approaches in the medical curriculum helps to develop critical thinking skills. Thus student doctors continue to learn their clinical skills, but are also taught how to read textual material, to look beyond the hard facts for soft data that will, hopefully, make them better

¹⁵ <http://medhum.med.nyu.edu/>, accessed 15 April 2012.

¹⁶ <http://medicalhumanities.wordpress.com/medical-humanities/>, accessed 15 April 2012.

¹⁷ See various contributions to Tim Swanick (ed.), *Understanding Medical Education: Evidence, Theory and Practice* (Chichester, 2010).

practitioners, and develop the empathetic skills that will improve the doctor/patient encounter. These skills help to prepare medical students for the practical components of their programme, when the clinical space replaces the lecture theatre as a site of teaching and learning. Doctors will be further humanized by the Humanities, and the discipline has been credited with helping to prevent burnout amongst practitioners, by encouraging them to develop the imaginative elements of their personalities. Practitioners who are members of the Association for Medical Humanities certainly confirm this interpretation, indicating that the discipline allows them to explore approaches that are necessarily excluded in their clinical work.¹⁸ In fact, Medical Humanities represents not a new departure but a reversion to the original form of medical education, when physicians were also classicists and historians. Historically a man would not be deemed professional with only a partial education in science, anatomy, and clinical skills. Ironically, it was the rise of evidence-based medicine, and developments in surgery, anaesthetics, antiseptics, and epidemiology that led to an exclusive focus on the disease, and not the patient. At the start of the twentieth century, major laboratory-based breakthroughs meant that student doctors were actively encouraged to treat the ailment, but not necessarily the individual who embodied it. As late as the 1970s, hospitals adhered to strict timetables and routines that tended to ignore the emotional needs of patients, even the most vulnerable groups such as the very young or the chronically ill. Clinicians agree that in everyday practices the biological approach in isolation ‘cannot address the various human phenomena that physicians encounter in their everyday practice.’¹⁹ Nowadays, the notion that children would be isolated from parents and siblings for the course of their illness is repugnant to us, but the provision of beds for parents in children’s wards, and a recognition of the impact of mental stress on physical recovery, are relatively recent developments. Medical Humanities has played a key role in the reconsideration of the whole patient, to the benefit of all. The discipline has encouraged the development of additional therapeutic aids such as music therapy, art therapy, patient education, and multi-disciplinary care teams in hospitals.

The benefits to medical practitioners and clinical practice as a whole are clear. But an equally important question, that we are attempting to address through the Consortium for Medical Humanities, is what might the benefits be for scholars in the humanities? On a practical level, we have seen the positive impact that the involvement of practitioners has had upon our work. It is not merely the fact that medical practitioners can engage with medical records on a different level, offering insights into therapeutic regimes and treatments that are unavailable to historians (although the world of retrospective diagnosis

¹⁸ <http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/amh/>, accessed November 2012.

¹⁹ Raimo Puustinen et al., ‘Medicine and the humanities – theoretical and methodological issues,’ *The Journal of Medical Humanities*, 29 (2003), 77-80.

is a rather dangerous one). More importantly, clinicians bring a distinct methodological approach to medical history, and the reading of literature, that opens up a whole new world of analysis. For example, our work on mental hospital records has been enriched through an understanding of the most recent clinical findings on genetic markers for psychiatric illness. Where historians have been inclined to look exclusively at social, cultural, and political factors in explaining, for example, the rise of institutional care, the insight of medical staff allows for a rounded explanation of medical dependency. And it is not merely a jigsaw, for which these staff supply missing pieces. Medical research provokes a re-examination of historical analysis of developments that appear to have an unshakable narrative, and has an interesting ‘knock-on’ effect. To take one striking example: it was part of Irish popular culture to point to the supreme irony of Jonathan Swift succumbing to insanity, having endowed St Patrick’s Hospital to care for the Irish insane. His self-penned epitaph seems to underline the wisdom of ‘not throwing stones’:

He gave what little wealth he had,
To build a House for fools and mad;
And show’d by one satiric touch
No nation needed it so much.²⁰

However, Swift was not in fact insane, but suffering from Menière’s disease, a condition of the inner ear that causes dizziness, hearing loss, nausea and disorientation. Poor Swift himself believed he was losing his reason, and contemporary commentators were all too willing to agree, seeing in his state a just punishment for the author’s savage satirical writings.

Since 2008 fruitful collaborations have resulted in medical humanities modules being embedded in Irish medical school curricula. Arising from a 2009 public health strand at UCC funded by the Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions, Cycle 4, and an Irish Research Council-funded Lifecycles project (2008-2010) at UL, we pooled resources to found the Consortium of Medical Humanities in March 2010.²¹ This Consortium, predicated on a cooperative basis, has formed a research cluster between UCC, UL, the University of Ulster (UU), Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) and Glasgow Caledonian University; it has yielded two further IRC awards and, more recently, a three-year Arts and Humanities Research Council award.²² The Consortium is working closely with the National Archives of Ireland to develop a Medical Records policy, which

²⁰ Christopher Fox, ‘Introduction’ in Christopher Fox (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 1-13, at p. 4.

²¹ <http://medhumsireland.com/projects/>, accessed 25 April 2012.

²² The Consortium also hosted the Association of Medical Humanities annual conference in July 2012 at University College Cork.

has at its core the development of historical resources as teaching and learning tools.²³ In Ireland, historical analysis is central to the development of the field, with scope for the inclusion of a wide variety of additional approaches. One of the key developments is an emphasis upon the preservation and digitization of vulnerable medical records, which hold a wealth of detail on medical practice, epidemiology, and social, political and cultural responses to professional medicine. Interdisciplinarity in the humanities has been impeded by lack of funding or indeed match-funding for inter-faculty teaching posts. We have however an active research bid that aims to enhance our existing portfolio and in conjunction with clinicians we are currently developing exciting interdisciplinary projects in medical demography and history at Trinity College Dublin: the potential for research-led teaching in the area will naturally follow from such interdisciplinary and inter-institutional initiatives. There are areas of significant strength in Medical History in Ireland, which suggest the potential for a unique national contribution to the international field.

²³ UCD established a Wellcome Trust-funded Centre for the History of Medicine in 2006. It is liaising with the National Archives and the Consortium to develop the records policy.

Emerging disciplines: three phases of development

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Science Europe

Introduction

In preparation for the symposium ‘Restating the value of the humanities in contemporary contexts’ (27 April 2012, National University of Ireland Maynooth), participants were asked to reflect on a number of pressing questions concerning the factors that enable, or limit, the emergence of a new discipline – especially in the context of the convergence of existing disciplines. Having worked at a national funding organization for a number of years, and having collaborated closely with a large number of funding bodies throughout Europe, I was particularly struck by one question: ‘What issues should be brought to the attention of funding agencies or other professional bodies?’

Before turning to this question, I should point out that the following text does not necessarily reflect the position of my employer at the time of the symposium (that is, the European Science Foundation) nor that of my current employer, Science Europe. Rather, what I will do here is share some general, but personal, thoughts on this issue. These are based on my experiences at a European level, where I had the good fortune to work with, and support, a wide variety of emerging and converging disciplines, mostly from a basis in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

It should also be emphasized that this note by no means intends to be prescriptive. Rather, it should be seen – in line with the objective of the symposium – as a paper to facilitate reflection on current developments, changes and evolutions and to stimulate discussion.

Three phases

The general question I wish to address is the one, already mentioned, concerning issues that funding agencies and other professional bodies may need to take into account. I will argue that, in order to answer this question, it is helpful to distinguish three phases in the development of emerging – or converging – disciplines. These three phases all have different characteristics that need different kind of attention if this research is to prosper.

Phase 1 – Pioneering

The first phase is what I would like to call the *pioneering phase*. This is the phase where the first outline of an idea is conceived, in such a premature state that to many people

– including peers in the scientific community – this idea will be seen as far-fetched. An example could be the first work on the evolution of language, when linguists and geneticists started to join forces. However – as always when taking an isolated example – there is much more to say about this collaboration and about whether it is a good example of what it is supposed to illustrate, than I have space for here.

The main point I want to make is that in this phase, a special kind of grant would be invaluable: small, high-risk research grants that allow researchers to test their idea. This type of grant need not involve a large amount of funding. Rather, what is needed mostly at this stage is the possibility to run a small, pilot project. However, this does not mean that these grants are a safe investment. Rather the inverse, as these pilots may very well turn out not to be successful. In fact, due to their highly innovative nature, the kind of truly pioneering ideas we are discussing here should not be expected to succeed in the usual sense. To put it more bluntly, if more than 10% of the proposed ideas turned out to be successful, the scheme should be re-evaluated to reconsider whether it meets its intended purpose to incubate highly innovative proposals.

To funding agencies I would add that this kind of scheme might imply the funding of researchers who do not have a proven track record – or at least not in the particular area of their current proposal. This is one more risky aspect of this type of funding scheme. Overall, in this phase the message is: dare to invest! Be prepared to take small losses ... with a big reward potential.

Phase 2 – Gaining popularity

Some emerging disciplines continue to develop beyond the first, pioneering phase and will gain in popularity. Often, this development goes quite rapidly and the emerging discipline might all of the sudden find itself as the ‘latest fashion trend’; everyone – funding agencies as well as colleagues in neighbouring fields – tries to jump on the bandwagon and get a piece of the cake. We all know plenty of examples. Two examples of fields that are currently in phase two featured prominently at the April 2012 symposium: the field of digital humanities and that of medical humanities. It is not a coincidence that disciplines in phase two (and not those in phases one and three) were well represented at the symposium; this is typical of the nature of phase two.

In this phase, a word of caution to the funding agencies is needed. Of course, it is tempting to share in the excitement. There must indeed be something to this new field that creates this excitement in the first place and no one wants to miss the boat. On the other hand, it really needs some reflection as to whether the field is experiencing a possible overload of attention and funding. The same goes, incidentally, for any specific research group or institute that particularly benefits from this attention. Great as this land of plenty may look at first sight, for a longer-term strategy and sustainable management a more gradual development may be preferable. Overall, this phase would benefit from

a coordination exercise. If funding bodies would make the effort to align their agendas strategically, this could lead to a more balanced spread of the available budget among both the various research priorities and the various research groups. Overall, this could lead to a more effective use of the scarce resources available.

Phase 3 – Consolidation

Once an emerging discipline has been enjoying a phase of popularity for some time, it may look as if the field's development has come to a (successful) conclusion. However, this is not yet the case. For a field to come to full maturity and to establish itself as an autonomous discipline which is here to stay, a period of consolidation is required. In this period, the fundamental infrastructure is to be set up which will allow for the organization of this new discipline at an institutional level. One might think here of the establishment of highly regarded, high-impact journals in the field. Or the organization of student curricula, not only in the form of PhD programmes or graduate schools, but at a more basic level in education.

An example of a discipline in this phase of development is the field of neurolinguistics. The point here is not to start a discussion about whether or not neurolinguistics is a well-established discipline – which many will argue it is. More important for the present purpose is the realization that even in this phase, some special attention may be needed. For example, no matter how high the success rate of project proposals from this field may be, a suitable permanent position or tenure track may be much harder to come by. Another example is the fact that selection committees are often organized along traditional, disciplinary lines. As an emerging discipline in phase three is not yet fully embedded into this traditional, academic structure, grant applications from this field will face a challenge relative to single-discipline competing proposals. At the same time, disciplines in phase three no longer enjoy the benefits of phase two during which the aforementioned challenges were outweighed by the popularity of the field. It is important to note that without special attention in this phase, one runs the risk of seeing the development of the field go downhill with the consequence that the earlier investments in phase two are not fully exploited.

Conclusions

In summary, three different phases can be distinguished in the development of an emerging discipline. In each of these phases, the discipline will benefit from a different type of support in order to reach its full potential. The eyes of many are turned towards disciplines in phase two. Although there may be good reasons for this, it is important to acknowledge the existence of the other two phases and to provide emerging disciplines in

these phases with the necessary support. Not only will this secure a more balanced and effective use of scarce resources but, more fundamentally, this is a sine qua non for the true support of emerging disciplines: to support an emerging or converging discipline means to support this discipline throughout the three phases of its development.

Persevering post-PhD: contemporary issues for early-career academics

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The rising levels of educational attainment in the Republic of Ireland are highlighted by the 2011 Census of Population reports published by the Central Statistics Office in 2012. Configured data contained in the penultimate report reveals that 31% of the population held a third-level qualification in 2011, an increase from 14% in 1991, and that 21,970 people held Level 10 (PhD) qualifications, of which 2,848 (13%) were in the Arts and Humanities. Although these statistics do not reflect the total number of doctorates awarded by Irish higher education institutions before April 2011 – or take into account the numbers of awardees who have emigrated in search of employment – they represent a significant 52% growth on 2006 figures.²⁴ Furthermore, despite the challenging economic milieu and an overall decline in postgraduate enrolments, figures published by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) for 2011 show that full-time enrolment on PhD research programmes in HEA-funded institutions continues to increase.²⁵ While any expansion of access to the highest levels of educational attainment can only be welcomed, the steady build-up of PhD graduates in the Humanities with few or no employment prospects in academia must be seen as an undesirable outcome.

A prevalent issue among aspirant academics is the general lack of clarity surrounding the position, status and function of those in the post-doctoral phase of their career and the variety of existing definitions of the so-called ‘postdoc’ in the wider academic community.²⁶ This is particularly relevant to humanities researchers who tend to work independently, with the support of a mentor, or under the supervision of a Principal Investigator on a team project. Combined with a general uncertainty about other contributions made by PhD graduates who continue or commence affiliations with higher education institutions, both situations are frequently interpreted as mere extensions of the postgraduate student experience, a perception which is endemic at administrative levels and beyond. Accurate, up-to-date databases of persons employed as contract researchers, postdoctoral or otherwise, are infrequently maintained, for instance, hampering the

²⁴ Central Statistics Office, *Census 2011 Profile Report 9: What We Know – Education, skills and the Irish language* (Dublin, 2012), p. 9, p. 20.

²⁵ Higher Education Authority (HEA), *Key Facts and Figures 2010/11* (Dublin, 2012), p. 42-7. There were 7,512 full-time PhD enrolments in 2010/2011 of which 1,312 were in the Humanities and Arts (not taking into account a further 91 enrolled in Department of Education and Skills or other department aided institutions [p. 116]). This represents a dramatic 65% upsurge since 2006.

²⁶ Irish Universities Association (IUA), *Building research careers: the postdoctoral experience* [Proceedings of a conference held by the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities, 4-5 May 2005] (Dublin, 2005), passim.

development of institutional research communities as well as the delivery of targeted communications pertinent to early career development.²⁷ Consequently, there are substantial departmental variations in the integration levels of postdoctoral employees, especially full-time contract researchers. The majority of representative organizations, moreover, act on behalf of ‘research staff’ but not all researchers in the tertiary sector are necessarily post-doctorate or embarking on an academic career and not all post-doctorates are researchers.²⁸

It is generally accepted that of course few PhD holders in any discipline will immediately secure a full-time academic position, research-focused or otherwise, and more than 50 per cent will seek non-academic employment.²⁹ Yet, one need only glance at the numbers applying for postdoctoral research fellowships in recent years to deduce an inundation of would-be academics in the Humanities. In 2012, for instance, there were 94 applicants for 3 Postdoctoral Fellowships awarded by the National University of Ireland; 17 were shortlisted for interview. (A parallel NUI competition for 2 fellowships in the Sciences attracted just 14 applicants.)³⁰

Table 1: IRCHSS Postdoctoral Fellowship Applications and Awards, 2005-2011³¹

| Year | Applications | Awards | Success Rate |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 2005 | 80 | 23 | 29% |
| 2006 | 116 | 22 | 19% |
| 2007 | 133 | 22 | 17% |
| 2008 | 97 | 28 | 29% |
| 2009 | 154 | 26 | 17% |
| 2010 | 253 | 25 | 10% |
| 2011 | 176 | 34 | 19% |

²⁷ This was certainly the author’s experience as a nominated representative of contracted postdoctoral fellows in the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy at NUI Maynooth and as a member of the university’s Post-doctoral Executive Board inaugurated in 2011.

²⁸ Established in 2007, the Irish Research Staff Association (<http://www.irsa.ie/>) serves as the national representative network for research staff associations in higher education institutions, the majority of which represent contracted researchers. At time of writing, NUI Maynooth appears to have the only institution-led, designated *postdoctoral* researcher forum with equal representation for practitioners in the Arts and Humanities.

²⁹ IUA, *The future of the PhD in Ireland: attracting and retaining postgraduate researchers in Irish universities* [Proceedings of a conference held by the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities, 9-10 November 2004] (Dublin, 2006), p. 8-9.

³⁰ Dr Attracta Halpin, Registrar, National University of Ireland, to the author, 30 November 2012.

³¹ IRCHSS Data Report, 2008-2011; IRCHSS Annual Report 2010; IRCHSS Annual Report 2011. These reports are available online at <http://www.research.ie/>, accessed 1 November 2012.

Prior to its merger with the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET), applications for postdoctoral fellowships awarded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), had increased from 80 in 2005 to 176 in 2011 with a dramatic peak of 253 in 2010 (see Table 1). (This mirrored developments at postgraduate level where applications for scholarships increased from 293 in 2005 to 537 in 2011 with a peak of 625 in 2010.) Given the intense competition for research fellowships – increasingly seen as a necessary first step along an academic career path – and few imminent options for progression even for those who have held a fellowship contract, budding academics increasingly find themselves in a nebulous post-PhD limbo.

The problem is compounded by the fact that there is a strengthening cohort of humanities PhD holders in Irish universities who do not formally occupy ‘postdoctoral’ positions as individual researchers or in research teams but who work as part-time, non-contract teachers.³² In saturated disciplines such as history they are increasingly forced to pursue an academic career on a voluntary basis, maintaining an academic profile and currency in their curriculum vitae by way of continued research, publications, conference organization, guest lecturing and other means. What is most disquieting is that some have already held contract posts but, given the limited jobs market, have not had opportunities to advance much further along the academic career path. Their designation in many institutions as ‘occasional’ staff implies that their contributions to university life are random, sporadic or by chance, when in fact many devise, deliver and assess entire undergraduate and postgraduate courses, usually for little remuneration. Moreover, much if not all of the emphasis in graduate programmes is on research – as are all of the postdoctoral fellowships on offer – but there seems to be little concern for cultivating quality teaching despite this being an important facet of many academic careers in the Humanities.

Acknowledging that early career academics are ultimately responsible for their own career development and a myriad of difficulties posed by the current economic climate, there are some challenges particular to the Humanities which might be obviated with institutional support. Most pressing is the need for more structured employment frameworks that would address the widening gap between the award of a PhD and a first contract post and between that and any further appointment. Such frameworks might also illuminate career paths which have less ambiguous role definitions, which are supported by transparent contract management policies as well as consistent recruitment processes for which information is more readily available. (Thus, it would be imperative that such frameworks be administered by Human Resources and/or Research Support personnel with backgrounds in the Humanities.) These processes have recently begun in some Irish universities but the focus tends to be where elements of structure already exist, in other

³² European University Institute, ‘Ireland, Academic Career Structure’ (2011) available at <http://www.eui.eu/ProgrammesAndFellowships/AcademicCareersObservatory/AcademicCareersbyCountry/Ireland.aspx>, accessed 1 November 2012).

words in science, engineering and technology research areas which comprise the majority of the post-doctoral population.³³ Years of investment in postgraduate humanities education has led to the development of more structured research programmes with a wide range of resources and supports, as well as dedicated and widely accessible information; this has evidently generated expectations of academic employment, or at very least a culture of ‘staying on’ in an academic environment.³⁴ Similar resources have not been devoted to those applying for or commencing in postdoctoral positions in humanities disciplines; many have begun contracts (often having received funding on the basis of a good idea and the support of a well appointed mentor) largely unaware of key performance indicators, requirements in terms of training or expectations in relation to profile enhancement. Having this kind of information available towards the end of structured research programmes would enable potential academics to make more informed decisions when considering their early career development.

The ‘solution’ habitually proffered by mentors, senior colleagues and advisory staff to the employment crisis amongst early career academics in Ireland is ‘emigration’ to other Anglophone countries but there is little conclusive evidence to suggest that the situation for practitioners in the Arts and Humanities is very much better abroad. However, what academic institutions in such places as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America do appear to offer is: better discourse on the plight of the early career academic; more research and information on academic and non-academic employment prospects and patterns; better integration between junior and senior colleagues; more evident concern for fostering and retaining academic talent.³⁵ Besides, Irish universities have a longstanding international reputation for scholarship in the Humanities, and as custodians of heritage and culture, which should translate into employment for early career academics. The HEA reported in 2011 that the Arts and Humanities were on a par with the Social Sciences, Business and Law as the most popular fields of undergraduate study for non-Irish, non-domiciled new entrants in 2010 – and

³³ See, for example, details of the Research Careers Framework at University College Dublin available at <http://www.ucd.ie/hr/rcf/>. Trinity College Dublin has also launched an Early Career Mentoring Initiative to support new and recently appointed academics in their first 3 years of service. See: http://www.tcd.ie/hr/development/staff/mentoring_early_career.php, accessed 1 November 2012.

³⁴ This ‘staying on’ phenomenon was identified by University of Oxford’s Centre for Excellence in Preparing for Academic Practice which has examined the career paths and experiences of recent Social Science PhD graduates working in academia in the UK and USA. See http://www.apprise.ox.ac.uk/academic_career_paths/, accessed 1 November 2012.

³⁵ For examples, see Prospects, the UK’s official graduate careers website, http://www.prospects.ac.uk/your_phd_what_next_academic_jobs.htm; University of Manchester, Careers & Employability Division website, <http://www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk/>; Guardian News and Media Ltd’s Higher Education Network, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network>; websites of the National Postdoctoral Association, USA, <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/>, and the American Historical Association, www.historians.org/; UniJobs, Australia’s university jobs website, <http://www.unijobs.com.au/>; the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada *University Affairs* magazine and website, <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/Careers.aspx>. All sites accessed 1 November 2012.

have been consistently since 2006. However, this has not been sustained at ‘research’ level where study in the natural and life sciences has by far the most enrolments.³⁶

The so-called ‘knowledge economy’ in Ireland should not be the monopoly of practitioners in the Sciences, Engineering and Technology but this is increasingly becoming the case. With no strengthening of the academic job market in sight and no apparent end to the oversupply of aspiring academics, higher education institutions would do well to ensure that the social and cultural impact of humanities research is more widely appreciated and that its future is secured.³⁷ The provision of greater opportunities for the commercialization of ‘knowledge’ in the Humanities and greater engagement with relevant industries, particularly in the heritage, culture and tourism sectors, might alleviate the burden of employment expectation among those persevering post-PhD in the tertiary education sector. It might also lead to the recognition of non-traditional performance indicators in academic appointment, tenure and promotion assessments and, eventually, less need to continually reiterate the public ‘value’ of the Humanities.

³⁶ HEA, *Key Facts and Figures 2010/11* (Dublin, 2012), p. 110-11.

³⁷ Royal Irish Academy, *Advancing Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), passim.

Creating open knowledge networks: innovating early-career researchers

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Early-career researchers are part of the knowledge society. We are creative, innovative and educated. We are committed to the ideal of the transforming power of education, so much so that we are prepared to spend more than ten years of our lives focusing on art, language, literature, lived experience, memory, cultural heritage, with their many interstices, to generate new knowledge and to create active engagement in critical, scholarly, multivalent research and pedagogy.

An orientation to the future means that we need to continue to do the intellectual and organizational work of remapping the chronotypical field imaginaries that structure disciplines like history and literature, of archiving and teaching social histories and multicultural canons that speak our students' lives and aspirations, and of inventing interpretative heuristics capable of naming and responding to the problematics of the present and the future.³⁸

My focus is textual transmission – how we represent the text in all its forms. As a medievalist and through years of professional training in a range of languages, iconography, epigraphy, grammar and code, I understand a long view of how we imagine, create, write and read – on the impact, subtle and profound, of the surface from which the text is read, stone or glass, backlit or not. How we read and write now is a critical nexus for the humanities, and for society as a whole.

New technologies, together with a framework of open access for funded research, promise a visionary academic practice outside of the ivory tower and directly accessible to taxpayers. The new mapmakers at the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO), as an example, recreate and augment traditional cartography and scholarship, and simultaneously grant a clear vision of information that has been made meaningful through interpretation.³⁹ In innovating, AIRO moves from data through information to create new knowledge represented online, and accessible to a wide range of end-users.

Researchers in many fields are actively engaged in transdisciplinary innovation, moving beyond traditional forms, in fields including literature and textual practice:

³⁸ Bruce Burgett, in Teresa Mangum, 'Making a Case for the Humanities: Advocacy and Audience', *MLA Roundtable* (2012), 1-18, at p. 4.

³⁹ All-Island Research Observatory | An tIonad Breathnaithe um Thaighde Uile-Éireann, <http://airo.ie>, accessed 25 November 2012.

[humanities research and education] practice what was called philology, or in August Boeckh's famous definition, *Die Erkenntnis des Erkannten* – 'the knowledge of what is and has been known'. The fundamental obligation of philology, of the humanities, is the preservation of cultural memory. It is an obligation that has been made both more difficult and more imperative in a world of just-in-time globalized cultural exchange.⁴⁰

Yet the form of the page, and the book, remains at the core of our cultural heritage and the most visible objects of our collective cultural memory. In 'Paperworlds: Imagining a Renaissance Computer', Sawday reflects that Luther refashioned the mental world of Europeans, with the aid of print technology;⁴¹ in our engagement with new forms of cultural transmission we have the potential today to do the same. The shift today is no less profound, and not in a reductive techmanagerialist or Gradgrindian mode; rather I see an opening up of access, of reading practices and engagement in research born of ubiquitous technology, a facilitating technology that demands a profound digital literacy to explode and further explore the potential of all texts. As Svensson notes in reference to 'Artereality', Schnapp and Shanks point to the intensity and seriousness of the battle fought in 'the cultural spaces being opened up by digital technologies'.⁴²

Through globalization and global mobility, multicultural and multi-ethnic societies are being created. These are networked societies, dynamic and inherently mobile, very much what Jenkins alludes to in his book *Convergence Culture* – where he sees giant corporates struggling to keep up with trends and innovations that routinely move beyond the previously obvious, to embrace new thinking and new things.⁴³ Humanities scholarship is at the forefront of this exchange, and must remain so as issues of culture, identity and communication are crucial to our understanding of a constantly shifting experience. It is our role as scholars to interrogate this space; the stasis of the mythical ivory tower is a forgotten metaphor as we actively engage with dynamic texts and contexts that characterize increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary humanities domains.

Within this vibrant domain a critical academic issue is that of Open Access, and the provision of an Open Cloud for Europe as part of a sustainable, long-term, research

⁴⁰ Jerome J. McGann, 'Memory Now', *4Humanities Advocating for the Humanities* (19 Aug. 2012), <http://4humanities.org/>, accessed 25 November 2012.

⁴¹ In Jonathan Sawday and Neil Rhodes (eds), *Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (London and New York, 2007), p. 1-17.

⁴² Patrik Svensson, 'The Landscape of Digital Humanities', *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 4:1 (2010), www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/, accessed 25 November 2012. Reference is to Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Michael Shanks, 'Artereality', in Steven Henry Madoff (ed.), *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* (Cambridge, 2009: MIT Press) p. 141-58, at p. 147.

⁴³ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York, 2006).

infrastructure initiative. As early-career researchers we need to question where our work will reside in the Ireland and Europe of the future. We understand the resonance and power of the library and need to know whether server farms are equally sustainable. Humanities scholarship asks questions of technology as well as providing content. We also need to interrogate older forms of scholarly publication. The recent academic spring movement queried the validity of traditional metrics for impact, and looked to new forms of engagement, still adhering to the quality control of double-blind peer review.

In much contemporary international scholarship methods of publication and professional engagement are transformed; outreach and transparency have become the norm. YouTube clips of conference presentations are downloaded and watched, twitter users retweet open access publications, researchers are active participants in online professional fora, and recognized international thought leaders' weblogs are cited multiple times in a variety of other venues. These new modes of engagement are online and often open to comment and interaction and must also be accredited examples of professional engagement.

In late 2012 Minister Sean Sherlock TD launched the National Principles on Open Access policy backed by twenty organizations including the Irish Universities Association (IUA) during Open Access week.⁴⁴ Yet nationally there is still no national strategy for data collection and preservation, no agreed minimum standard(s). There is an exemplar in the work of Caitriona Crowe and the National Archives, who have modelled an accessible free service.

There is widespread recognition that this type of access is good for the knowledge economy, the knowledge society, and fuels innovation. These initiatives must be bolstered in application criteria for academic posts, so that the researchers with downloads of their open access thesis numbering in the hundreds can make the impact of their field explicit. We urgently need to rethink our understanding of impact, and its new multiplicity of forms.

Some questions from the early-career researchers include: will this work (creating open, internationally aggregatable and searchable digital objects) count for promotion? Will the processes which engage with, within and without academe, be valued? How will these be assessed and by whom?

We facilitate the paradigm shift, and drive the digital agenda forward. We look to work with technological infrastructures, and augment and sustain the national knowledge and innovation agenda, creating new roles for researchers in the knowledge society, researching, interpreting and representing Ireland in the world, according to best international standards in a range of media.

⁴⁴ 'Government Launches National Open Access Statement – 23 Oct 2012', Irish Universities Association, www.iua.ie, accessed 25 November 2012.

Afterword

‘Are you serious?’

Broadcasting the Arts and Humanities

Vincent Woods

As someone who presents arts programmes on radio and facilitates many public discussions and debates on the arts and humanities I have become an advocate for the enduring power and relevance of both and a public voice for them in Ireland. As an artist I am happy to cast some small light on the work of fellow artists and as a former journalist I know how important it is to maintain the strength of that light and not allow it to be diminished or quenched by multiple forces, commercial or political.

The programme *Arts Tonight* on RTE Radio 1 aims to provide a significant public platform for discussions that often encompass the arts, humanities, economics, politics, architecture and society. A recent series of programmes to coincide with the 23rd International James Joyce Symposium in Dublin is an example of public service broadcasting giving a wider forum to academics and giving more people a chance to engage with a series of discussions that would not otherwise have been open to them.

This is one small example of the kind of links that can and should be made between artists and academics in the humanities and the broader public. Other programmes, like the discussion with Eoin Bourke on his book *‘Poor Green Erin’: German travel writers’ narratives on Ireland from before the 1798 Rising to after the Great Famine* (recorded at the Goethe Institute in Dublin), also underline the power of radio in highlighting material of considerable national significance, and its ability to span the academic and popular, serving both well in the process.

Radio is just one of the mediums that can be used to create and strengthen the connections between the arts and humanities and society. It is the medium that I know best but I am aware of the importance of all new media in reaching new audiences and making connections with more people. In restating the value of the humanities I believe it is vital to reach out beyond a cohort of academic colleagues and remind as many people as possible (and as diverse a constituency as possible) of the value of the arts and humanities.

I also believe that there is a need to restate the value of the links between the arts and humanities and areas like science, technology, medicine and economics. This is not to diminish the intrinsic value of the humanities; it is to acknowledge and hopefully nurture the vital role that the humanities and arts can play in these other areas that are too often seen as utterly separate. A good example of this link acknowledged and supported is the Arts in Action programme at the National University of Ireland, Galway, under the direction of the singer and lecturer Mary McPartlan. This programme has seen medical students form an orchestra, engineering students engage with poetry and drama, and artists enter the university to paint, make sculpture, read, write and play. It is a small practical example of a statement (or restatement) of the value of the humanities within a broader context.

When I was asked to present what was to become ‘The Arts Show’ on RTE Radio 1 in 2007, I spoke to Mick Heaney in the *Sunday Times* and said I believed there was a hunger in the country for serious, considered coverage of the arts. I learned afterwards that some of my occasional colleagues in radio objected to my use of the word ‘serious’ – as if it implied some criticism of other programming or pointed to a lack of seriousness in radio.

In retrospect perhaps it did but that was not my intention, not did I mean that ‘serious’ could not encompass humour, colour, inventiveness. More than anything, what I meant was that the arts should be taken seriously, should be discussed, enjoyed, challenged, engaged with much in the way that politics, economics, and the new god of sport are brought to us daily, sometimes hourly, and without question.

At the 2010 Dublin theatre festival I hosted a panel discussion on some of the themes sparked by the musical *Enron*: economics and financial power, the role of banks and banking in society, human greed and political failure and how the arts, in this case theatre, can engage with current affairs. One of the panellists was the *Guardian* columnist Aditya Chakraborty who later wrote about the failure of philosophers, sociologists and political scientists to engage with this financial collapse and world economic crisis. It occurred to me that artists and academics could be added to that list. Not that all, or even most art should have to engage with anything more than itself – but if artists and academics disengage completely from the world of politics and economics we leave it to politicians, economists and journalists – and that is bad for society and democracy.

It strikes me that in restating the value of the humanities in contemporary contexts one context that cannot be ignored is economic: where money comes from, where it goes, how it functions, how Ireland got to where it is today (a place that threatens basic funding for arts and humanities programmes and a great deal more). We have to look at the implications of ‘austerity’ for the humanities, the arts, humanity, artists, scholars, education and society.

The more we can challenge the insidious separation of arts and humanities from society, politics and economics, the greater the hope of rebuilding this country and society. When those that work within the humanities engage with the wider world the place of the humanities within that world can only be strengthened, the value of the humanities consolidated.

Contributors

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Lucy Collins is a lecturer in English Literature at University College Dublin. Educated at Trinity College Dublin and Harvard University, she teaches and researches in the area of twentieth-century poetry and poetics. Her anthology *Poetry by Women in Ireland 1870-1970* (Liverpool University Press) appeared in 2012 and *The Irish Poet and the Natural World* (co-edited with Andrew Carpenter) will be published by Cork University Press in 2014.

Jane Conroy is Professor Emerita of French at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She publishes in the areas of French cultural history, travel literature and cross-cultural transmission. A member of the Royal Irish Academy and former Humanities and Social Sciences Secretary (2005-2010), she has contributed to humanities advocacy publications (*Advancing Humanities and Social Science Research in Ireland*, RIA, 2007; *Playing to Our Strengths*, HEA/IRCHSS, 2010), and chaired the Humanities Serving Irish Society (HSIS) consortium for two terms.

Catriona Crowe is Head of Special Projects at the National Archives of Ireland. She is Manager of the Irish Census Online Project, which has placed the 1901 and 1911 censuses online free of charge over the last four years. She is an editor of Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, which published its eighth volume, covering the period 1945-1948, in November 2012 and editor of *Dublin 1911*, published by the Royal Irish Academy in 2011. She is a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

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Eva Hoogland obtained her PhD in mathematical logic from the Institute for Logic, Language and Computation, at the University of Amsterdam. Over the past twelve years she has worked with scientific foresight, strategic research advocacy and science policy in a variety of emerging research fields, with a special interest in the Humanities and Social Sciences. From 2001 to 2006 she was the coordinator of the national Cognition programme at the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). From 2006 to 2012 she worked at the European Science Foundation (ESF). In 2012 she joined Science Europe, where she has been involved in the start-up of the Scientific Committees for the Humanities and Social Sciences; currently, her focus at Science Europe is on the Humanities and the promotion of a strong position for the Humanities in Europe.

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Orla Murphy is a lecturer in the School of English at University College Cork, in the national inter-institutional Digital Arts and Humanities (DAH) PhD programme, and co-coordinator of the MA in DAH at UCC. Her research is focused on intermediality: on how the text is, was, and will be transmitted; how we read, represent and share knowledge in new networked and virtual environments. She is co-chair with Fredrik Palm, HUMlab Sweden, of the information visualization working group of NeDiMAH (Network for Digital Methods in the Arts and Humanities) and vice-chair with Alain Trémeau, Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Étienne, of the CoSCH (Colour and Space in Cultural Heritage) working group on algorithms and 3D representations.

Francis O'Gorman's recent publications include editions of John Ruskin's *Praeterita* (OUP, 2012) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* (OUP, 2013). Recent essays have been on Larkin, Wordsworth, Swinburne, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Tennyson, and the modern university. He is a Professor in the School of English at the University of Leeds.

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Vincent Woods is a playwright, poet and broadcaster. He presents the weekly radio programme *Arts Tonight* on RTÉ Radio 1. His plays include *At the Black Pig's Dyke* and *A Cry from Heaven*. He has been Writer in Residence at NUI Galway and is a member of Aosdána.

