

Announcing: special issue of *Humanities* (January 2015):

Research ‘Values’ in the Humanities: Funding Policies, Evaluation and Cultural Resources

Contributing authors are members of the Academia Europaea;

Guest editor: Cinzia Ferrini (Department of Humanities, University of Trieste).

This **special issue** of the open-access peer-reviewed and refereed multidisciplinary journal, *Humanities*, offers cohesive, multi-faceted reflections on the modernisation of higher education in Europe. The title draws from the international workshop, “Funding policies and research values: strategies and needs, risks and prospects,” organized by the guest editor at the university of Trieste in May 2014 on behalf of the Barcelona Knowledge Hub of the Academia Europaea. Papers by members of the humanities cluster of the AE provide current debates with new tools of analysis and diagnosis; their publication in *Humanities* broadcasts these tools as widely as possible, highlighting the public actions for the humanities of the Academy of Europe.

LINKS:

http://www.mdpi.com/journal/humanities/special_issues/research_value

http://www.mdpi.com/journal/humanities/special_issues/research_value#published

Table of Contents:

Article: Research “Values” in the Humanities: Funding Policies, Evaluation, and Cultural Resources. Some Introductory Remarks

by Cinzia Ferrini

Humanities **2015**, 4(1), 42-67

Abstract: In her capacity as guest editor, the author introduces a set of essays examining the trends, risks, needs, pressures, and prospects of the humanities after recent reforms to tertiary education throughout Europe. By focusing on the educational, cultural, and social value of research in the humanities, which also provide economic and democratic benefits, this special issue focuses on three key topics: “funding policies”, “evaluation”, and “cultural resources”. This article provides the background to the subject matter (Section 1); a reflection on the controversial issues of quality control, measures of research productivity, and funding decisions as key drivers changing the humanities (Section 2); an overview of the current difficulties and prospects for “modernizing” the humanities (Section 3); the rationale for this special issue (Section 4); the context and a synopsis of the contributions, showing how and why these position papers by members of the humanities cluster of the Academia Europaea can provide this debate with new tools of analysis and diagnosis (Section 5). Finally, the concluding remarks highlight the Academia Europaea’s actions for the humanities (Section 6).

Essay: From Literature to Cultural Literacy

by Naomi Segal

Humanities **2015**, 4(1), 68-79;

Abstract: In recent years, the academic field of literary studies has changed radically. Literary scholars are now working on objects other than poems, dramas or fiction. This essay presents an ongoing strategic project, *Cultural Literacy in Contemporary Europe*, which was founded in 2007 and run in 2009-11 as an European Science Foundation & Cooperation in Science and Technology (ESF-COST) synergy. Its aim is to investigate and celebrate the range of research currently being conducted in the field we have renamed “literary-and-cultural studies”, or LCS. This research aims to enhance cultural literacy. Cultural literacy is an attitude to the social and cultural phenomena that shape our existence—bodies of knowledge, fields of social action, individuals or groups, and of course cultural artefacts, including texts—which views them as being essentially *readable*: it is a way of looking at social and cultural issues, especially issues of change and mobility, through the lens of literary thinking. The project focuses on four academic fields—cultural memory, migration and translation, electronic textuality, and biopolitics and the body—and four concepts: textuality, fictionality, rhetoricity and historicity. It stresses multilingualism and is part of the movement of interdisciplinarity within the humanities and between the humanities and other disciplines, but remains a distinctive activity within that larger movement.

Essay: Humanities under Pressure

by Jürgen Mittelstrass

Humanities 2015, 4(1), 80-86;

Abstract: The Humanities have a problem with visibility both in the public sphere and in the academic system itself, and they have an organisational problem when compared with other sections of the academic system. They also have a funding problem, particularly in a European context, *i.e.*, in the framework of the European research policy. The topic of this position paper is the essential role of the Humanities when dealing with the European project, the framing of Europe. In this respect, in contrast to the natural and social sciences, the Humanities need specific models of research funding, more individualised and of more interdisciplinary character. Additionally, they may need more multi-national centres for advanced studies on a European level, thus also solving their visibility and organisational problems.

Essay: Schemes of Funding Music Research in Italy: A Case Study in Comparison with other European Countries

by Carolyn Gianturco

Humanities 2015, 4(1), 87-97;

Abstract: The awareness of the central government and other supportive agencies in Italy as to the need for research to be accomplished in music and music history in that country is determined by first stating what that support has been for such research in the 1990s, together with its accessibility to groups and/or individuals working in that field, and then reporting how such aid has been reduced in the more recent times of financial crises. In order to assess Italy's position not in isolation but more realistically by considering it within a broader geographical frame, the same investigation has been accomplished for a group of other culturally developed countries in Europe which offer sufficient areas of comparison: Spain, France, England, Germany. Sadly, Italy does not come off well.

Perhaps surprisingly but still sadly this is shown not to be due to the present financial crises but to a long-standing absence of respect for the entire musical history of the country and for the need that it be known and understood thoroughly. In short, the government in Italy seems not to have been sufficiently aware of its responsibility to acknowledge and preserve its musical patrimony by adequately supporting research which aims at uncovering the country's rich past, understanding it, and thereby making it available to professional performing musicians and, through them, also to the people of Italy and the rest of the world.

Article: [The Humanities as a Public Good and the Need for Developing Accountability Strategies](#)

by Henrik Stampe Lund

Humanities 2015, 4(1), 98-108;

Abstract: The present political and economic context of the humanities is more demanding than ever in regards to its justification, social impact and evaluation of research activities. These processes call for an updated understanding of the situation and a prudent counter-strategy that, in a best-case scenario, could result in appreciation opportunities that have thus far been neglected. This article contributes to a differentiation of these grand challenges at three levels: (1) Improved understanding of the policy agenda: The humanities, like other research disciplines, still have to map the full picture of all opportunities in funding policies. The EU's framework programs could be one example of a funding system that contains inclusive mechanisms that have not yet been fully discovered. (2) Research management in the humanities: To benefit the most from those identified inclusive mechanisms, the humanistic disciplines have to develop better and more sophisticated research management tools for their projects and improve their strategic planning and capacity. (3) The humanities as public good: The humanities represent one of the greatest cultural resources of humankind. The task is to make this as explicit and clear as possible to the general public through the explanatory power of the main categories, including recognition, judgment, experience, wisdom and common sense, which mirror some of the most important historical and cultural experiences of human history.

Essay: [Integrity and Quality in Universities: Accountability, Excellence and Success](#)

by Onora O'Neill

Humanities 2015, 4(1), 109-117;

Abstract: The essay focuses on the tension between the integrity of a university's ideal or mission (academic freedom, innovation, excellence in research and teaching) and approaches to accountability that are used to monitor performance and to establish criteria for university funding. The paper examines evaluation systems and the distorting effects of the incentives some of them create, especially when different metrics are combined in order to rank academic institutions. Such league tables prioritise comparative success rather than excellence, which is not a positional good. Yet better forms of accountability are possible. Some simple aspects of academic and educational achievements can be measured reasonably accurately and are less open to manipulation. These include hours of study, standards of writing, and the amount of feedback on written work received by students.

Essay: Clashing Concepts and Methods: Assessing Excellence in the Humanities and Social Sciences

by Peter Scott

Humanities **2015**, 4(1), 118-130;

Abstract: The humanities are going through a period of exceptional vitality characterised by the proliferation of novel interpretative frameworks, methodologies and perspectives. Yet they—and, to a lesser extent, the social sciences—feel threatened by the rising tide of research assessment which appear to be predominantly derived from the needs and experience of the physical and natural sciences and depend on the application of standardized assessment tools. This position paper intends to contribute to the debate on the current criteria of evaluation and measures for excellence in the Humanities by casting light on their conceptual implications and methodological assumptions. It argues that decisions about their relative weight are not simply technical but also reflect underlying value systems.

Article: No Future without Humanities: Literary Perspectives

by Svend Erik Larsen, Susan Bassnett, Naomi Segal, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Jan Baetens, Patrizia Lombardo and Theo D'haen

Humanities **2015**, 4(1), 131-148;

Abstract: What might Humanities have to offer to the current big societal and technological challenges? The nine short position papers presented here were collected by Svend Erik Larsen from colleagues and members of the Academia Europaea Section for Literary and Theatrical Studies who have been actively involved in the changes within their discipline in the areas they introduce. They show emerging interdisciplinary fields, provide new insights, indicate significant cultural achievements and forge new collaborations in order to shape the outlines of the research landscape of the 21st century. Their main concern is not the future *of* Humanities, but the future *with* Humanities.