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# The Ubiquity of Humanity and Textuality in Human Experience

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**Abstract:** The so-called "crisis of the humanities" can be understood in terms of an asymmetry between the natural and social sciences on the one hand and the humanities on the other. While the sciences approach topics related to human experience in quantificational or experimental terms, the humanities turn to ancient, canonical, and other texts in the search for truths about human experience. As each approach has its own unique limitations, it is desirable to overcome or remove the asymmetry between them. The present article seeks to do just that by advancing and defending the following two claims: (a) that humanity is ubiquitous wherever language is used; and (b) that anything that can be experienced by humans is in need of an interpretation. Two arguments are presented in support of these claims. The first argument concerns the nature of questions, which are one of the fundamental marks or manifestations of human language. All questions are ultimately attempts to find meanings or interpretations of what is presented. As such, in questioning phenomena, one seeks to transcend the negative space or oppression of imposed structures; in doing so, one reveals one's humanity. Second, all phenomena are textual in nature: that which astrophysicists find in distant galaxies or which cognitive neuroscientists find in the structures of the human brain are no less in need of interpretation than the dialogues of Plato or the poems of Homer. Texts are ubiquitous. The implications of these two arguments are identified and discussed in this article. In particular, it is argued that the ubiquity of humanity and textuality points to a view of human nature that is neither individualistic nor collectivist but rather integrational in suggesting that the realization of oneself is inseparable from the realization of others.

**Keywords:** humanities; questions; languages; integrationality

## 1. Introduction: How to Make Humanities Relevant

What challenges confront the humanities in the contemporary period? While this question has been approached in a variety of ways ([1], pp. 310–11), I would like to characterize the contemporary crisis within the humanities in terms of the following two propositions: The first is that almost all academic subjects have been, or are in the process of being, transformed from qualitative to quantitative studies in light of the success of the natural and social sciences. For example ([2], pp. 47–48), quantum physics has shown the properties of chemical elements in minerals in a distant galaxy usingspectroscopy. The Hubble space telescope produced a photograph—the Hubble Ultra-Deep Field—by digitalizing various analog light phenomena from distant galaxies, revealing that there are hundreds of billions of galaxies each of which has over a hundred billion stars and that those stars have different sizes, shapes, colors, ages, and elements. Genetic biologists have designed a DNA sequencer to read genetic information, to describe the detailed elements of life cells, and to characterize "digital files" for all living beings. Furthermore, the digitalization of the information in living organisms allows for synthetic genomics and the construction of new living organisms ([3], pp. 46–50). These kinds of successes in the natural sciences have pushed the social sciences in the direction of using more quantitative methodologies. For example, psychology, which was once regarded as a qualitative discipline, has come to rely more heavily on quantitative methods.

The second proposition that characterizes the contemporary situation is that the humanities cannot be approached quantitatively because their proper function is to interpret human experience qualitatively. Whereas the natural and social sciences understand and explain phenomena by discovering patterns among quantitative descriptions of individual objects or events, the humanities seek to provide descriptions of qualitatively different alternatives to present human experience. Literature, history, and philosophy exemplify this kind of pursuit. Literature is not a description of actual human experience but is rather the imaginative construction of possible worlds or experiences. Similarly, history provides interpretations of past events that are dependent on certain values or background assumptions. Historical events are unique and quite distinct from the events studied in the social sciences, which are seen as belonging to generalizations or laws. Philosophy is not a description of constative truth but rather an activity of conceptual analysis and the reconstruction of a more reasonable reality. Thus, literature, history, and philosophy are not quantitative endeavors but rather constructions of possible worlds that are qualitatively different from present human experience.

Given these two propositions, the need for, and relevance of, the humanities is called into question, for the quantitative sciences can deal with almost all intellectual challenges and qualitative reflections are directed solely to the interpretation of literary texts. This is the so-called "crisis of the humanities", which is evident within contemporary universities and other social institutions. This crisis raises many questions, including the following two: What can be done about the asymmetry in significance between quantitative and qualitative disciplines? And is it possible to overcome the crises of the humanities? The present article addresses these questions and aims to offer a solution to the crisis of the humanities. My proposal can be summed up with the proposition that humanity and textualities are ubiquitous. In what follows, I analyze the concepts of "humanity" and "text" studied within the humanities and show how these two notions can be extended. These analyses enable us to welcome the

successes of the quantitative understanding of human experiences on the one hand, while ensuring the continuing relevance of the humanities and texts on the other.

## 2. Ubiquitous Humanity

### 2.1. The Ubiquity of Humanity: Asking a Question

What concept or concepts of "humanity" are the humanities assumed to advance? Dictionary definitions of this term refer to all people in the world, feelings of fellowship, kindness, and values to promote and safeguard the preservation of human life and dignity. These dictionary definitions are helpful to a certain extent, but they can also be challenged in a variety of ways. How do we know that the concept of "humanity" really means those things? Can we observe such a thing as humanity? How is it that all human beings can agree with those dictionary definitions? What is the mechanism behind this marvelous consensus despite the different cultural backgrounds that exist in this world?

A single hypothesis, I suggest, provides answers to each of the foregoing questions. The hypothesis is that human languages reflect how we humans think of ourselves, and all humans who are capable of using a language are bound to accept the understanding of humanity which language presupposes. In other words, human language is a mirror of humanity[1]. I will begin the argument for this hypothesis by considering the notion of a question[2].

A two-year-old child asks her mother, "What is this?" Her mother answers, "It is a puppy." The child asks, "What is a puppy?" The mother answers her child again, but each response from the mother generates a further question from the child. What do the child's questions show? What is the difference of the child before the questions she asks and after the answers she receives? One account of the difference is as follows. Before the question, what the child refers to by means of the indexicial term "this" may have no meaning and no relation to other terms she uses, but after the question and the answer "this" comes to have a relation with other terms and becomes a meaningful object. Though what was denoted by "this" before the question and the answer was merely an indefinite x, it becomes a concrete object of meaning in the child's conceptual world after the question and answer. So the child's conceptual system is enriched through the process of questioning and answering, and in this sense the child enters into a preferable position in comparison to her original state.

The child's question resembles the philosophical tradition in which a question (τί ἐστι) is asked of an object or a concept. For example, a number of people can talk about a thing in different ways, but as people keep asking the *ti esti* question, there emerges a concept or a definition of it ([6], pp. 17–19). The child is extending her conceptual world by asking questions while not knowing the meaning of

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[1] The idea that human language is a mirror of humanity is nothing new. When Aristotle said that humans are rational, Chomsky that language is innate, and Wittgenstein that humans play a language game, one may see the idea behind their remarks. What I try to do here with the idea is to show through an analysis of the notion of question that humans are themselves active agents who connect language and humanity; that humans, language, and humans are necessarily integrated with each other; and that the presence of one indicates the presence of the other two.

[2] There are various discussions about the notion of a question. For example, G. Stahl proposed that the meaning of a question is a set of correct answers ([4], pp. ix–xvii), C. H. Kahn was leaning toward a view that questions are attempts to categorize human experiences ([5], pp. 227–78). But I tried here to go further to relate the notion of question both to the notions of language and humanity.

words like "concept" or "essence". Questions extend not only speakers' conceptual worlds but also human relationships and solidarity. One can generalize from this claim by saying that any question exhibits humanity as human relationality, which is embedded in the very structure of the languages that human communities have constructed[3].

"How much is this?" "Would you discount these items?" What does this bargaining over prices reveal? On the surface, the bargaining suggests that the buyer and the seller are trying to reach a point that is commercially beneficial to each of them. But, on a deeper level, the bargaining may be taken as an act of human solidarity based on the structure of the market as well as a shared system of linguistic communication. Citizens are both consumers and producers, and there are procedures where wants and desires can be met through exchanges of various sorts. Most of the bargaining we engage in manifests humanity as human relationality arising out of human communities. Bargaining is a means of achieving a mutual benefit, an important element of humanity.

Concrete questions extend the meanings of terms and realms of freedom. They also exemplify the humanity of the questioner. But how are questions related to the character and development of communities of language users? Questions generally originate from an intellectual position or attitude that refuses to accept all things as they are and instead doubts the relations, meanings, essences or properties of things. A dog accepts the world with which it is presented whereas a young child investigates his or her surroundings by asking questions. Speakers imagine alternatives when they do not accept things as they are given. Questions are acts through which one tries to go beyond what is given. Organized systems tend to be autonomous, self-sufficient, and self-preserving, whereas questions can be critical of systems or their parts. Tyrannical power wants to preserve systems whereas questions seek to transcend systems.

Freedom is a conceptual space where one experiences the possibility of an alternative to the present world. A "given system" may be either natural or artificial. All systems are open to questioning. A natural system is one that seeks to understand what is naturally given and to explain the relation between humans and the environment. An artificial system, such as a legal or administrative system, even when constructed with benevolent intentions, tends to end up oppressing weaker members of a society. Questions may be directed with good intentions even toward those benevolent systems in order to attend to their inconveniences or oppressive tendencies. Questions are the seeds of greater freedom.

Questions can be categorized into various branches according to the idea of a division of labor and efficiency. When we ask questions about natural and social phenomena so as to give them more meaning and to unify them in a new way, we glimpse a wider and freer world than that which we embraced before the question. We may grasp our place in the natural and social order. Though human beings appear to be atomized individuals, they are in fact born into social worlds with important ties to other human beings. Questions raised by the natural and social sciences are not essentially different

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3   Sangkyu Shin and Ae-Ryung Kim [7] have raised objections to my attempt to connect the ubiquitous humanity thesis to the notion of language use. Kim suggests that the connection may depend on a choice of values stemming from a certain usage of language, and Shin observes that the connection would be circular unless the two theses of ubiquitous humanity and language use are independently defended. The two criticisms are plausible. However, human beings cannot escape from the languages into which they are placed; they are bound to construct the nature of their own relationships through linguistic communication. Therefore, their apparent choice of values and the logic of integration between humanity and language are interwoven in the natural history of their evolution.

from those considered in the humanities in that questions are formulated in systems of languages with the purpose of extending the meaning of our world and attaining the conceptual space in which humans can be freer.

## 2.2. The Notion of Humanity

The foregoing can be summarized as follows: all concrete questions ultimately shed light on humanity because of the way in which questions are related to languages. This provides some understanding of questions in general, where notions of reflection, criticism, transcendence, possibility, alternatives, and freedom are all interrelated. Thus, I propose the following as a deeper definition of humanity: it is the disposition by which one realizes oneself and others into a wholesome[4] being and extends human solidarity and world integration by the means of pursuing better alternatives to oppressive systems. Humanity is ubiquitous in the use of language and the integration of human activity. It is not something that can be added to language use; it is inherent in all linguistic acts, including simple greetings and complex negotiations.

We may now consider the ontological aspects of humanity. It used to be said that size and weight are primary qualities and that color and fragrance are secondary, but then what kind of quality is humanity? I think that humanity is a property or a power to seek liberation from the state of oppression, boredom, or negativity in general. This is not an eventual property, such as a donation or wedding, nor an active property, such as a choice or a kicking. Humanity is a dispositional property like kindness; it is also an intellectual property, such as coming to know another person. When we say that "Miss Park is humane" we refer to the ways in which her life manifests the value of humanity more or less consistently rather than to some particular events[5].

Humanity is also the power of semantic ascent. Let us consider the bargaining process once again. When a buyer accepts the information on the price tag of an article she is positive toward the frame of the seller. At that point two systems of the buyer and the seller are compatible and the buyer may purchase the item without any need to bargain. But when the buyer thinks that the designated price is too high, the thought is an act of disagreeing with a part of the frame presented by the seller. Then the buyer may seek to negotiate for a better price. When the buyer thinks that the price of an item is too high, she removes herself from the seller's frame. She transcends one system to another. This transcendence can also be called "semantic ascent" in the sense that two systems are constructed of linguistic meanings and are related in a way that the move has a direction.

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[4]  The expression "wholesome" can be understood under the concept of integration which has been developed by the ideas like fitting and integration given in footnotes 4 and 10. For the time being, one sense of the term would be sufficient when the term applies to objects of art. The notion of an object of art is itself in need of explanation. One suitable definition, which comes from Yunhui Park ([8], pp. 249–59) is that of "a possible unique world". On this characterization, "possible" designates a modality where there is a property of freer space. "Unique" refers to a property of construction which is creative, autonomous, and independent. And "world" indicates that an art object is not an independent subject but part of a system of objects that require interpretation.

[5]  In the present context of the discussion of humanity I limited myself to the boundary of humanity where natural languages are accessible. One may extend the discussion to the wider context where humanity may be taken to be seen as an ecological property ([9], pp. 163–82).

We can generalize from this by saying that human imagination is linguistic and indicative of semantic assent. For example, when a father orders his daughter to return home by a certain time and the daughter rejects her father's demands, rule enforcement and rule disobedience come into conflict, but the wise daughter translates the language of these two events into two different language systems by a semantic ascent, where a system of rule enforcement and a system of rule disobedience can be compared. Then, the conceptual distance between the two systems allows father and daughter to reflect on, and discuss, what kinds of values are given priority in each system and why. Negotiations over the price of goods in a marketplace do not arise merely from differences of opinion about the appropriate price for certain goods; they arise from differences between the buyer's frame of purchasing power and the seller's frame of balance sheets. Generally speaking, people may be in a better position to enter into dialogue with others as they come to understand the differences between their systems and those of others in terms of idiosyncratic values, presuppositions, rules, and purposes as opposed to the objectification of persons and objects[6].

## 2.3. Intervening Non-Humanity

There is one serious objection to the thesis of the ubiquity of humanity: How can one defend the thesis of ubiquitous humanity in the face of the despotic tyrannies of absolute monarchs and dictators past and present? They are not the only ones who are against humanity. People can fall into situations in which they act against humanity without any intention to do so, especially when they live in a society filled with prejudicial stereotypes. As D. Kahneman ([11], pp. 377–85) points out, people are caring when they engage in the slow-thinking of deliberation but are often selfish when engaged in the fast-thinking of action and judgement. When people must think quickly, they are predisposed to act irrationally and without humanity. In other words, even though I seek to actualize humanity, elements of non-humanity deep inside me sometimes rise to the surface. When I engage in fast-thinking I can be a victim of egoism, nepotism, lookism, and other forms of prejudice or discrimination. In this

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6    Quine's notion of semantic ascent is used here to shed light on the concept of humanity ([10], pp. 270–76). Ontologically factual statements like "there are unicorns in Tasmania" are interpreted as statements such as "there are biological species of which the predicate 'being a unicorn' is true." A story of unclear objects is turned into a story of clear vocabularies. Quine goes further to say that existence is the value of a bound variable. His goal was to explain the unclear notion of existence in terms of the clear grammar of a language. This notion of semantic ascent is useful in the context of humanity. For humanity can be grasped as a power to achieve the value of freedom out of a given states of affairs. Humans are exposed to intrusion and the dominion of non-humanity. Non-humanity emerges not only in the context of violence, oppression, and the objectification of persons, but also in the background deterioration of the global environment. Semantic ascent in the context of this non-humanity means an effort to turn the conditions of objectified human lives into the conditions of a better order of the grammar of a language. This effort includes among other descriptions of those negative human conditions, clarifications of the shared objectives of a community, critical evaluations of the present negative predicaments, comparisons among alternative directions, dialogues towards a consensus. This effort involves linguistic deliberations and communal communication, elevating a perspective from one dimensional physical surroundings to a higher multi-dimensional conceptual levels. Such semantic ascent attempts to strengthen human solidarity or to extend our understanding of the worlds around us. The application of semantic ascent to the context of humanity may look non-Quinean to some, but it is useful for the purposes of this article.

fast-paced age of information-processing, people are easily trapped in inclinations toward non-humanity ([2], pp. 42–47).

How could a proponent of the ubiquitous humanity thesis respond to this challenge concerning the ways in which non-humanity interferes with people's lives? What is the relationship between the two? Of course, humanity and non-humanity exhibit opposing values. Humanity exhibits the value of the expansion of freedom, which is characterized by words like dream, fly, leap, possibility, liberation, and communication, whereas non-humanity displays the value of restricting freedom, which is described by terms such as boredom, solitude, silence, impersonality, constraint, and oppression[7]. Fortunately, in the contemporary period there is more space for humanity than non-humanity. This is perhaps because the pursuit of humanity is more consistent with the grammar of communication among free and equal agents. As the transparent grammar of dialogue has been further implanted in society, humanity has evolved to adopt this grammar as its constitutive element.

## 3. Ubiquitous Textuality

### 3.1. Text and Context

As we have seen in the foregoing, humanity is typically exhibited in the context of questions and answers, but if humanity is ubiquitous it should emerge wherever languages are properly used. For example, humanity is demonstrated when I make a promise by saying "Let's meet next Tuesday"; or when pastor proclaims "John and Mary are now husband and wife." The promise and the proclamation in these instances are typical of institutional humanity. These present humanity by the force of human institutions. The promise to meet is a catalyst for a sort of human bonding, whatever the purpose of the meeting may be, and the wedding proclamation is not a description of a fact but an act of constructing a beautiful human bond. In this sense, these are examples of the presentation of humanity. The bargaining that takes place in a marketplace, as we have noted, is also a case of institutional humanity. My claim that humanity is present wherever language is properly used depends, strictly speaking, on the institution of language. But humanity need not to be restricted to verbal languages. Humanity may well be non-verbal.

The hypothesis that humanity can be non-verbal requires a supporting argument. In order to understand meaning, one may turn to theories of language use rather than to theories of reference[8]. This may help to shed light on the distinction between text and context, since understanding verbal text consists of taking into account various elements of the context in which the remark is made. Ideal languages or theories of pure rationalism judge that the semantic properties of propositions can and must be determined independently of speakers and contexts. But this perspective is no longer considered plausible in contemporary theories of language meaning. In all ordinary languages, especially in

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[7] As for notions like silence and solitude, I will make a distinction between the positive ones and the negative ones. The positive ones are those which enhance human potentialities, being derived from one's own choice and initiation, whereas the negative ones are those which hinder human possibilities, coming from other than one's own freedom.

[8] The reason why one turns to theories of language use rather than to theories of reference should be obvious. For I happen to believe that there is no fact of the matter on which the meaning of an expression can depend on, as Kripke ([12], pp. 1–54) has shown.

languages such as Korean and Chinese, context plays an important role in the interpretation and understanding of the text[9]. For example, the subject or object of a sentence is easily omitted in context in several Asian languages, and there are many homophones in most languages. Yet these facts pose no trouble for people communicating in specific contexts since speakers rely on context to fix the interpretation of their statements[10].

## 3.2. Non-Verbal Language

Let us now consider further the hypothesis that textuality is ubiquitous. Words are not the only elements of language; the arts, images, and gestures also comprise a kind of language. Gestures, for instance, are the building blocks of body language. They have a communal meaning ([11], pp. 434–39). However, body language is restricted in two ways. One is the limitation of variations of bodily expressions, and the other is the limitation of communicative objectivity. As an illustration, there is a Korean legend in which the hero says to the heroine, "I want to lay a silver (*binyeo*) hairpin to your head." The meaning of the gesture is not determined solely by his intention but also by the background understanding within the speaker's community. Those who are not familiar with the forms of life of this community might take the gesture as an expression of compassion rather than as a request for marriage[11].

[9] There are various notions of context, many of which are slippery. The concept of context my argument relies on is a modal notion which was constructed by R. C. Stalnaker ([13], pp. 96–114), where (i) contexts are all the situations which speakers recognize during their discourses; (ii) assertions are a kind of proposals to change contexts through exchange of information of situations; and (iii) if a world is all the situations there are then if a possible world $w_i$ were materialized then $w_i$ is all the situations given to speakers in that world.

[10] Another example that connects text and context is found in the claim that the meaning of an expression is the way in which it is used. The idea of "the way in which an expression is used" can be grasped by the notion of fitting ([14], pp. 420–39). The conception of fitting, like those of other value terms, can be thought of as having temporal stages of evolution in the following 6 steps: (i) All animals have likes and dislikes. They like what is useful for their survival and dislike what is not; (ii) Animals might not have the power of recognition in the initial stages of their evolution. It could be that dogs could recognize their masters only after a long process of cognitive development. A dog's recognition may be explained by its capacity to fittingly adjust to contexts rather than a simple theory of truth semantics. In the beginning, dogs might not be able to discriminate their masters from others. But as they meet their masters repeatedly they come to recognize their masters. Acquaintance might be related with qualities which are useful for their survival. It can be said that dogs have come to discriminate what is fitting from what is not; (iii) Human beings construct habits of fitting by employing the criterion of fitting which they have learnt through acquaintance with their environments, habits fitting for their survival. Habits are not only convenient but also efficient, not only economically but also mechanically; (iv) When habits are constructed, the relation of fitting for the habits becomes a value. Habits supervene on the structure of likes and dislikes, and typify the structure; (v) When habits are shared by a sufficient number of people, a community arises out of the shared values. Some human beings build a community as they are gregarious according to their shared values of fitting; (vi) As the form of life in this community includes a communal effort to communicate with each other, means for the communication obtains some communal meaning. The notion of fitting provides a basis for the hypothesis that texts are ubiquitous, that text and context are continuous, not fundamentally separable.

[11] The notion of gestures as languages may be generalized to the notion of states of affairs as languages ([2], pp. 14–15). States of affairs are informative. For example, consider the fact that a magnetic stick attracts iron filings. Physicalism would hold that the magnetic stick and the iron filings have merely passive properties whereas dispositionalism would assert that they have active powers; they interact with each other to manifest the result of their permeabilities. The

Arts too are languages. One can compare verbal languages with paintings or dances [15]. Verbal language is a language based on the logic of finitely differentiated and disjointed characters and hence can be used as the basis of a reasoning language. On the other hand, the language of painting or of dance lacks what a verbal language has but can depict what is felt toward an object by denotation if not by representation [16][12].

*3.3. Film Language*

Many films are non-verbal, yet I suggest that films too are languages. So the idea that whatever is non-verbal is not a language is crucial to the above thesis. What is a film? Turvey introduces the paradox of film by saying that a viewer believes that what she sees does not exist and yet she responds to it emotionally. In order to solve the paradox there have been attempts to explain it by appealing to notions like recognition, imagination, transparency, and illusion. Allen's notion of depiction is interesting in this context ([18], pp. 76–94; [19], pp. 431–57). When we look at a film, patterns of colors are spread out on a screen. However, what we see is not the patterns of colors but what the film depicts. What we see in the film is not an object itself, nor an illusion, but rather aspects of objects. What we emotionally react to in a film is neither a thought nor our imagination but rather a filmic depiction of the denotation of a fiction. Allen's view of depiction seems to be an adaptation to film of the notion of aspectual seeing found in Wittgenstein's writings ([20], Par. 74, 79). Someone might see her own father in the formation of clouds; another might see that her youngest brother resembles her mother. When she sees her father she does not see her father himself but rather sees someone who is small in height, white haired, or talking in an idiosyncratic way. Aspectual seeing cannot be described by a mere enumeration of the physical properties of an object. Aspectual seeing cannot be directly represented nor pointed to in terms of physical properties. Aspects can be non-physical, invisible, or abstract. Seeing a film is seeing what is depicted in the film as in perceiving what is seen aspectually[13].

A theory of film language can be derived[14] from discussions of painting language or the language of states of affairs by adding some auxiliary premises. Candidates for such premises include some of the observations given by Lev Marnovich[15] and Chris Marker, such as "seeing a film depends on film

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properties of the magnetic stick and iron filings and the powers that they have are one and the same; they are organic, integrational, and informative. If information is lingual, then so too are states of affairs.

[12] J. Margolis ([17], pp. 376–89) is critical of S. Langer who says that dance is a language. However, Margolis's arguments are not persuasive ([15], pp. 95–99). For he requires that arts are a language only if arts consist of a convention of rules and there is a symmetry between the presentational symbolism of arts and emotional symbolism of arts, and he thinks that Langer fails to provide the necessary condition, but his notion of arts language is too representational to accommodate.

[13] One may relate a filmic seeing with Wittgenstein's notion of aspectual seeing ([20], pp. 193–214). When we look at a particular person in a room, all of us can see propositionally that the person is a man, whereas many of us can see aspectually that the person is kind or that the person is not kind. Aspects of an object are neither physical, nor representational.

[14] Sung Yong Kang [21] worries that this sort of language expansion program may hinder language quantification and, furthermore, that it may require that we classify all non-truth functional languages as other than normal or ordinary. This observation would raise a serious objection if one were to hold a truth-conditional semantics. However, the fitting semantics that I endorse grants meanings not only to verbal expressions but also non-verbal expressions.

[15] These are some of the statements Lev Manovich delivered in his lectures in Seoul [22].

writing," "a film is the joining of cartoon cuts with a story," and "a film is a collection of photographs with a story." One can add to this the phenomenological perception theory about film ([23], pp. 182–209).

## 4. Textuality of Humanities

### 4.1. Denotation of Classic Humanity

Humanity is exemplified in many different ways, but the paradigmatic exemplifications are found in the classics. So let us ask "What is a classic?" Webster's dictionary defines the word "classic" by listing three elements, namely, being of the highest quality, having permanent value, and attracting enduring interest. The dictionary does not explain how these elements are chosen, but I suggest that they are chosen from the perspective of exemplifying humanity. So a work of art, music, or literature is called "classic" if and only if it is of the highest quality, has permanent value, and attracts enduring interest so far as it exemplifies our humanity. It is in this sense that the three conditions are necessary and sufficient for a text to be a classic.

The dictionary codifies the term in a way that presupposes that human beings live in a single conceptual world. While a text may be useful in one culture and not in another, a classic is thought to be a classic across all cultures. What this means is that all classics contribute to the formation and preservation of humanity. One can say that our humanity is nothing but the result of the construction of those classics understood as the tradition of crystalized human experiences. This concept of the classics is consistent not only with the present formulation of humanity—that is, a total disposition to realize not only oneself but also all others into a wholesome being by extending human solidarity and world integration in pursuit of better possibilities against oppressive systems—but also with the present stipulation concerning texts, namely, that a text is an exemplification of humanity.

Suppose that there were no classics in the history of mankind. If so, what kind of human community would there be? The human community without classics might not have been the community which values notions of reason, justice, freedom, republic, and the like which are marks of humanity and which we have known. It is through classics human beings have, over the course of the last several millennia, constructed higher and higher levels of humanity. So the initial supposition above is not true. Classics have been meaningful and necessary; they are the basis of the culture humans enjoy and are still in the process of developing. It is the classics that are responsible for the human community that currently exists, a human community with the value of humanity.

The dictionary definition of "classic" is based on a quantitative approach, which can be examined empirically, rather than a qualitative understanding concerned with the content of a concept. So let us ask "What are the powerful contents of classics that converge empirically on the foregoing three conditions?" I suggest that the classics consist of these four elements: humanity, systems, knowledge, and questions. These content conditions are different from the aforementioned empirical conditions in that the former are, while the latter are not, distinct from each other and each of them admits of degrees ranging from 0 to 1. The three conditions of systems, knowledge, and questions provide neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for being a classic. However, the condition of humanity is necessary, but not sufficient for a work to be a classic.

Let us therefore reconsider the condition of humanity. All the classics involve human lives or a human understanding of the world. Some of them deal with human life directly, through stories, others do it indirectly with abstract interpretations of human experiences. They all shed light on conditions of human existence and thereby enable readers to approach truths about humanity. Readers are sometimes excited by the classics and at other times saddened or enraged by them. They reflect on these stories of the past and envision lives in the future. Most of the classics are stories of possible, rather than actual, worlds, yet they enable people to communicate with each other more personally and more profoundly. They extend the world of meaning and freedom. This condition of humanity is the key feature that ensures the empirical conditions of the classics converge on the four qualitative conditions mentioned above. In other words, the four empirical conditions are indicative of the hypothesis that the classics are essentially stories of humanity.

Some of the classics display the characteristics of systems. Philosophical texts, such as *The Critique of Pure Reason*, histories like *Democracy in America*, and works of poetry like *Four Quartets* all have the character of systems. They contain their own perspectives by which they interpret the world. Each of them has a unique and consistent world view. If a reader accepts its world view, she becomes a citizen of that world and experiences the kind of freedom that world view has constructed. But if a reader comes to read *Naming and Necessity, Ordinary Men*, or *The End and the Beginning*, she would have an experience of yet a different world. Those who read many classics come to be open to a variety of perspectives about the same discipline or even subject. This kind of reading can be contrasted with exclusive or orthodox interpretations of religious canons. Orthodox readings do not allow for differences in interpretation. This kind of reading can be given, not only of religious texts, but also of other classics. Such a reader tries to preserve the internal rules the classic requires and then extends the boundary of that system to apply to other classics, but the best way of reading the classics is to respect the authenticity of each unique text.

Almost all the classics have elements of knowledge. In the philosophical literature, knowledge has been understood in terms of justified true belief. One may add to these necessary conditions further conditions such as trust, naturalization, or causality ([24], pp. 282–83). The sense of "knowledge" associated with the classics may be a loose one, perhaps based on the conception of fitting, rather than the truth conditional notion of knowledge. While the latter demands a correlation between the quantity of knowledge and the quantity of truths, a looser notion of knowledge may hold that the amount of knowledge can be derived from the volume of interpretations ([25], pp. 5–30). When we engage in discussions about a subject, many conflicting interpretations allow for a bigger enrichment of experiences than just one single interpretation. It is also natural that readers of the classics experience many different ways to interpret the world rather than an increased volume of truths. We are often moved more by the heated discussions of academic meetings than by the painfully derived result. Likewise, reading the classics enriches our experiences of the world because of the possibility of multiple interpretations of the world.

Furthermore, the classics contain the element of questions. It is what brings the classics to life in the present. Every classic starts with a question, even if it is not made explicit. If a classic is the telling of a story, one can ask why this is a story worth telling, and the contents of a classic generally unleash a stream of deeper questions. Readers are moved by a classic and the questions they inspire to address the present experience of them, reflecting on their present experiences and looking partially or wholly

into the future. These questions reward readers with a sense of joy and excitement, much like the excitement a young child experiences when asking questions[16].

*4.2. Humanity and Humanities*

I suggested above that humanity is a total disposition to realize not only oneself but also all others into a wholesome being by extending human solidarity and world integration in pursuit of better possibilities against oppressive systems. But how should one characterize "the humanities"? I propose that the humanities are the systematic deliberation of humanity or its results in a chosen discipline. The natural and social sciences take various quantitative approaches toward natural and social phenomena, whereas the humanities approach actual and possible human experiences qualitatively. As irrational numbers are not countable and yet they are real, subjective experiences are not countable and yet they are real in the space of human lives. Many problems in human societies can be studied quantitatively, but there are other problems that can be approached only qualitatively. Problems like alienation, suicide, environmental problems, political entanglements in the Middle East will not be solved in a quantifiable way, as through war, but are in need of qualitative solutions, such as those that take place in diplomacy.

The nature of the humanities can be understood in terms of the theses of the ubiquity of humanity and textuality. The humanities, which are based on the present notion of humanity, become holistic according to their ubiquitous character. Thus, holistic humanities should be clearly distinguished from the traditional humanities, which have been understood institutionally. Institutional humanities generally include the disciplines of literature, history, philosophy, linguistics, and religion. When these disciplines are organized for administrative purposes within a university, those departments hold their own idiosyncratic subjects for professional studies. There are profound reasons to protect and defend the division of labor within colleges of humanities. These divisions mark the "divisional humanities". If the thesis of holistic humanities is plausible, the thesis points to what may be called "post-divisional humanities," in addition to divisional humanities. Accordingly, divisional humanities and post-divisional humanities are compatible and complementary, both accepting a general formulation of humanities, that is, that humanities are systematic studies of possible experiences of humanity going beyond the constraints of natural or social phenomena through verbal or non-verbal languages ([29], p. 22). Divisional humanities can scrutinize the importance of given disciplines with respect to the future, while post-divisional humanities may develop professional capacities to analyze, interpret, and communicate with those areas of newly emerging cultures[17].

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[16] One may pay attention to one particular characteristic of my notion of denotation of classic humanity, that is, that my notion is pluralistic. But the notion of classic doesn't have to be in conflict with the notion of canon [26]. Teachers or institutions may come to favor a particular list of books or art works, depending on their choice of values or objectives, where consistency rules, as they were discussed by Bloom [27] and Searle [28]). Notions of classic and canon play at a different level, with classic working across various cultural traditions at a meta-level and with canon pointing to a particular direction at an object-level.

[17] Ae-Ryung Kim [7] notes that humanity expressed through verbal texts may have a grammar that is different from the grammar of humanity conveyed through non-verbal texts. This is an important reminder. As literature, history, and philosophy have different grammars for revealing humanity in their own proper disciplines, it should be accepted that texts may contain different grammars according to whether the texts are verbal or not. This issue needs further consideration.

## 4.3. Divisional Humanities and Post-Divisional Humanities

Ubiquitous humanity can be illustrated in other ways than through verbal texts. Therefore, the humanities should pay attention not only to classic verbal texts but also to the exemplifications of humanity in non-verbal texts. The fine arts and performing arts provide demonstrations of humanity through non-verbal languages. The performing arts break down the boundaries between the canvas and non-canvas, western paintings and non-western paintings, work and non-work, and act and result. Whereas traditional art work has been regarded as eternal in the sense that it is atemporal, the performing arts are necessarily in the present. While art work usually remains even after the artist disappears, a performing artist may proclaim "I myself am the work of art". A physical work of art, understood as a concrete universal, is replaced by a personal life with bodily meaning.

Humanity conveyed through non-verbal texts allows us to see that the traditional distinction between theory and practice is no longer necessary. Traditional philosophical theories such as Platonic Idealism, Cartesian rationalism, or Kantian transcendentalism have assumed that there is one and only one correct interpretation of the world. Furthermore, it has been widely assumed that ordinary language is incomplete and unable to develop into an ideal theory. However, the linguistic turn of the 20th century led philosophers to change the units of thoughts from ideas to sentences, giving systems clear criteria by which to be judged, namely, the truth or falsity of sentences. Any sentence originates from a particular system and can be judged as true or false according to rules of the system. An ordinary language is a form of life for a community and there are various sorts of communities: horizontal communities (e.g., natural languages) and vertical communities (e.g., artificial languages). Pluralism of both communities and systems is the inevitable result. Theories are regarded as heuristic tools to explain a concrete problem at hand. There is more than one system for explaining the world fittingly. Theories are systems of partial explanations and ordinary languages are systems for understanding holistic experiences. Practices are understood as the actualization of maxims derived from a particular theory. Thus, there is a division of labor where scholars investigate theories and activists engage in practices. While participation in practice without a theory is blind, studying theories without practice is empty.

But the boundary between theory and practice has been weakened due to semantics. Traditionally, language meaning was taken to lie in the space of the relation between an expression and an object. The so-called "referential theories" have been influential in explaining the notion of truth. However, this tradition has been challenged by claims that there is no fact of the matter to ground the meaning of an expression in external things and that meaning is actually rooted in the forms of life of a community. The meaning of an expression is the way in which the expression is used by the community. Accordingly, the boundary between theory and practice has never been there independently of a community and the distinction is merely a convenient fiction. If there is no boundary between theory and practice, then one can support non-verbal textualities of humanity while still upholding verbal textualities, for the continuity between theory and practice bears continuity between the verbal and non-verbal.

One may rightly ask for a clarification of the relation between divisional humanities and post-divisional humanities. Since the classics are the paradigmatic forms of humanity, literature, history, philosophy, linguistics, and religion have roles to play as divisional humanities, although they

need to be strengthened to meet the needs of the times. The theses of ubiquitous humanity and ubiquitous textuality do not limit humanity to verbal texts alone. The ubiquities of humanity and textuality direct intellectuals to go beyond the boundaries between divisional humanities and to attend to the humanity revealed in non-verbal texts. There is a profound need for post-divisional humanities. As such, one can attempt to fuse various topics from each of the divisional humanities into one great subject or to construct topics of humanity revealed in non-verbal texts systematically into a unique subject. There are various multi-dimensional categories by which one can mix many emerging themes. Topics like image, communication, body, death, nature, city, technology, artificial life, mind-extension, and trans-humanity can be approached either through divisional humanities or post-divisional humanities. The more explanations there are, the brighter the future is for both the humanities as well as humanity[18].

## 5. Human Solidarity

### 5.1. Humanity and Anthropology

Each of the various types of humanity has its own unique anthropology. The Confucian notion of humanity comes from its belief in the edifying powers of education. The ancient Greek view of education, with its emphasis on virtue and citizenship within the city-state, offers a different notion of humanity. The Renaissance offers yet another notion of humanity based on the use of reason in daily life. In the contemporary period, humanity is generally understood in terms of the minimum of what is legally and socially required of citizens.

All of the traditional humanities pursued the question "What is genuine humanity?" but each did so according to its own unique anthropology, such as the humanity of the noble man, the humanity of a free citizen, the humanity of freedom, or the humanity of minimal duties. What those traditions sought can be compared with integrational humanity, that is, the thesis that humanity is a total disposition to realize not only oneself but also all others into a wholesome being by extending human solidarity and world integration in pursuit of better possibilities against oppressive systems. The nobleman's humanity limited the concept of humanity to social integration whereas the humanity of a free citizen excluded others who were not free. The humanity of freedom did not examine its foundation for that freedom, while contemporary notions of humanity eschew all of the questions that enlightened people are supposed to ask.

How does integrational humanity supplement the inadequacies of the traditional types of humanity? Each of the traditional humanities has attended to some particular aspect of humanity and therefore exhibits only partial humanity. The traditional humanities have not exhausted the wholesomeness of each anthropology; they are extemporaneous prescriptions suited to the needs of their times. But integrational humanity is a wholesome humanity arising out of a universalized anthropology. It was

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[18]  The distinction between divisional and post-divisional humanities is relative to the ways the institutions of colleges of humanities are operated. The distinction is arbitrary and needs to be adjusted appropriately to the situation where various needs of institutions may arise. We may recognize one general division of labor where traditional humanities are engaged in verbal texts and contemporary humanities in non-verbal texts. Institutions called "college" and "center" may be allowed to have separate roles to play in this division of labor.

previously analyzed[19] in terms of the proposition that realizations of myself and of all others are one and the same [30]. Then the notion of ubiquitous humanity can be given more clearly, by saying that it can be materialized easily when questions are properly asked in languages and answers are well provided in societies and thereby when one's realization is integrated with realizations of all others. This integrational anthropology sheds light on some of the debates concerning liberalism and communalism[20].

## 5.2. Liberalism vs. Communalism

J. S. Mill presented a unique formulation of what human beings are when he constructed his liberalism: the properties of human beings in a society are derived from the laws of human nature and whatever can be reduced to those laws [32]. C. Taylor is critical of the idea that human beings are self-sufficient independently of society, the idea that is implied by liberalism based on the atomic view of human individuals [33]. Mill's liberalism can be traced back[21] to Luther's notion of the solitary man (Der Einzelne) reaching salvation through faith alone (sola fide) [35] and Descartes' identification of the soul with the "I" in "I think therefore I am." Liberalism can be used to protect the rich, on the assumption that ownership of private property is a form of freedom ([36], pp. 209–40), but it can also be used to defend the poor by insisting that socio-economic inequalities should be arranged so as to benefit the least-advantaged members of society ([37], pp. 5–6, 302). But both of these versions of liberalism prioritize the rights of atomic individuals.

Communalism adopted the Aristotelian perspective that human beings are social animals or political beings. Humans may appear to be separate beings but their thoughts, actions, habits, and values are embodied in a social setting. Therefore, a community is constructed out of acquaintances, habits, shared memories, and space. Moral judgments or political actions on this view are to be judged on the

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[19] The analysis of the proposition which is expressed by the Chinese sentence 成己成物 can be summed up as follows. This anthropology is based on the idea of integration (誠) of *The Doctrine of the Mean*. The conception of integration consists of the following five propositions ([30,31]): (i) The integration of a thing is the property of the thing to realize the principles of the thing that are connected with the principles of all others; (ii) "Mind" denotes the power of all things to process information; (iii) Integration is the power of minds, not only of human beings, but also of all other things; (iv) If evolution reflects the history of the development of the present species then history shows the evolution of the intellects of those species and the justice of their forms of life; (v) The integration of a thing is a power to realize itself in the best possible way in a given situation.

[20] Ae-Ryung Kim [7] claims that "the integrational anthropology that realizations of oneself and of all others are one and the same may be interpreted variously depending on a choice of a topographic map of anthropologies." What Kim means by this is that the theme of power, whether political or not, plays an important role in this context. Of course, the category of power needs to be analyzed in terms of concrete human experiences, but it is the priorities that need to be emphasized here. Human solidarity can be examined in two distinct senses. The relation of human-bonding is the primary sense in which human beings are never to be treated as mere means, whereas the division of labor provides a second sense in which it is practically difficult to treat persons as ends in themselves. This is discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.

[21] The relation between Mill's liberalism and Luther's reformation theology can be seen in the following description: "Quite unintentionally, then, the Protestant reformers prepared the way for liberalism. By teaching that salvation comes through faith alone, Luther and the other reformers encouraged people to value individual conscience more than the preservation of unity and orthodoxy. Moving from individual conscience to individual liberty was still a radical step for the time, but it was a step that the early liberals took" ([34], pp. 51, 47–50).

basis of the standards of languages which members of a community construct as they interpret the worlds they experienced. Otherwise, evaluations would be empty, abstracted from the beliefs, practices, and institutions of the community. Rorty spoke of ethnocentrism using the example of how the US is bound to act on its interests [38], and Walzer claimed that the caste system in India may be justifiable by its own criteria ([39], p. 313). Lee Kuan Yew proclaimed that there is such a thing as "Asian values" and suggested a need to construct a Confucian communalism on the basis of the regional space, memory, and value ([40], pp. 121–49).

How should one understand or reconcile the differences between liberalism and communalism? Both of them try to embrace individuals and societies, and both try to construct individual and social ethics. The terms "liberal communalism" and "communal liberalism" have been used to try to fuse these doctrines together, but in terms of their respective ontology and metaphysics, these doctrines are quite different. The choice of policies often depends on whether individuals are viewed as either atomic or social beings. Many academics avoid choosing between these options, preferring instead to be tolerant of both individuals and societies. This sort of stance may be politically safe, but it is conceptually unclear. If one strives to take care of the least advantaged members of society starting from the premise of atomic individuals, one's motivation may reflect a genuine human authenticity but one's judgement will not be persuasive. In a similar vein, if one attempts to make room for respect for individuals in the context of communalism, which derives from the premise of social humanity, the motivation may once again be sincere but the judgment will lack coherence.

### 5.3. Human Bonding and the Division of Labor

Humans are relational beings. Ontological atomists like J. Locke and J. S. Mill admitted that human beings are socially related. Many relations among human beings, both in the West and the East, are institutionalized. In Korea, the Joseon Dynasty structured the positions of all men in the land and thereby defined the relation among human beings, classifying them into aristocrats, professionals, common people, and lowly men. In India, the caste system has been applied to all men, differentiating Brahman (priests), Kshatriya (aristocrats), Vaisya (merchants), Sudra (ordinary people), and Harijan (untouchables). Contemporary societies have overcome such hierarchies, at least formally if not perfectly, but have categorized all citizens in a division of labor according to their abilities. Societies have classified people in terms of their levels of education and occupations without institutionalizing them in terms of a hereditary mechanism. These positions are nevertheless used to determine one's identity and worth.

Integrational anthropology offers an alternative to this idea that status should be based on anthropology. It distinguishes the relation of human solidarity into the relation of human bonding and the relations of the division of labor. The relations of the division of labor allow for one's status to be determined by the role one plays in society. These roles are important and need to be respected, but they are not the primary relations by which one's identity is determined, which are the relations of human bonding. The relations of human bonding are the relations individuals have to each other in virtue of being human. In this primary relation, people are viewed as ends in themselves rather than as means to further ends. This is the fundamental basis of the ethical principle that one should not do to others what one does not want done to oneself.

## 6. Conclusions: Ubiquities and Humanities

I have in the foregoing argued that humanity and textuality are ubiquitous. I will conclude by commenting on some of the implication of these two theses. First, these two theses may help to overcome or narrow the gap between quantitative and qualitative disciplines. The quantitative methodologies of the natural and social sciences have achieved great results investigating the phenomena of nature and society. However, researchers working in the humanities have limited themselves to studying traditional verbal texts—the classics—and have largely ignored non-verbal texts. As a result, they have engaged only partially with the full phenomena of humanity. This explains the asymmetry in scope and success between the quantitative and qualitative disciplines. The quantitative disciplines are continually discovering new fields and expanding the scope of their studies, whereas traditional divisional humanities appear to be shrinking. However, the thesis of the ubiquity of humanity and textuality enlarges the scope of research for the humanities and helps to construct a post-divisional humanities. In doing so it reduces or eliminates the asymmetry between the sciences and the humanities.

Second, these two theses shed light on the extent to which improper relations of humanity have skewed human history, for the idea that the relation of human bonding is prior to the relations of the division of labor has failed to embed itself in the lives of human beings. When individuals meet and greet each other they generally understand their identities and refer to each other in terms of their social roles or occupations, a practice that subjugates the relation of the human bond. In effect it is a convenient restoration of the caste system which was abolished by contemporary legal systems. A person who calls another according to his or her occupational role does not enter into the primary relation of the human bond but rather subjugates that relation to that of the division of labor. In order to ground the primacy of the relation of the human bond, new kinds of appellations are needed[22].

Finally, the central theses presented in this article may provide guidance on how systems of education should be reformed or transformed. In the past, educated people were expected to strive toward the three ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty, but education in the contemporary world should cultivate an appreciation, not only of verbal texts, but also non-verbal texts, and universities should therefore develop programs to achieve that pedagogical goal. On the one hand, Colleges of the Humanities should strengthen each of the disciplines within the traditional divisional humanities. On the other hand, Centers for the Humanities can institutionalize subjects, topics, or themes of contemporary post-divisional humanities, both for the purposes of teaching as well as for research. If researchers and educators working with the humanities are not sensitive to these newly emerging challenges, commercial sectors of societies may take control of subjects like philosophy for the production and consumption of non-verbal texts. It would be much more desirable for those in the humanities to help to develop the commercial sectors of society in the area of the non-verbal cultures. Just as natural and social sciences have been leading in efforts toward the betterment of the world, the

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[22] Sung Yong Kang [21] observed that it would be easy to accept the idea that the relation of the human bond is primary, although it would be difficult to institutionalize it. Of course, an individual may look powerless, but through communication individuals can realize the value of their collective intentionality. Studies of appellations in English and French may help in this regard, since acquaintances call each other by their first names, especially between parents and children, and between teachers and students.

humanities can and should explore the ever-expanding horizon of ubiquitous language and humanity so that we may introduce another new age of civilization where all human beings are free and fulfilled.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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