The New Humanities as Research Agenda:

Exploring Loci for Communication and Allied Fields

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Abstract

This paper tackles the role and contribution of the agenda for new humanities research in light of current initiatives to redefine the research agenda in Philippine universities. Specifically, it answers the following questions: What constitutes the new humanities? What is their rationale as domains of knowledge and as modes of inquiry? How do the new humanities contribute to redefining the university research agenda in the Philippine context? Lastly, how can communication studies and related fields insert themselves in the supposed updated typologies and definitions? Therefore, this paper explores the possibilities for the new humanities to balance the depersonalizing influence of the new technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and how these may be relevant to mapping new prospects for communication and media research.

Keywords: new humanities, research agenda, communication studies, domains of knowledge, modes of inquiry

Introduction

In June 2019, the Asian Media Information Centre (AMIC) convened a conference entitled "Communication, Technology and New Humanism." Held a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic started, the prevailing concern of researchers and practitioners of communication and media at that time was the widespread impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution – particularly, the technologies of communication and information that it spawned - upon human society. There had been since a proposal to promote discussions on the New Humanism that could assist scholars in navigating the contours of research in the discipline. Additionally, the conference brought to light the pressing need for a new world communication order that will revitalize traditional or classical humanism if a new one is not yet at hand.

Before and after the pandemic, it was established that the massive shifts in human consciousness today have been due to the major, if not the sole, contribution of technology and communication in our lives. What we once considered mere tools or media of communication became the driving force of contemporary life. They have become the major instruments of social interaction. And as they have re-ordered our way of apprehending (or even operating within this world), they have created a new episteme, a new way of knowing the world. We are at this juncture of history partly because communication and media have become so greatly revolutionized by technological advances that possess the capacity to create a new communication culture.

Perhaps the oldest program of learning that came down to us from the early days of Western civilization is what is now collectively called the Humanities. We traditionally associate it with the old program of studies offered when the first universities were established in Medieval Europe. Universities such as the University of Bologna, University of Paris, University of Oxford, and University of Salamanca were the first to offer what was called the Classical A.B. or Bachelor of Arts, which was designed to educate those who would like to pursue higher studies of theology and the wealthy class who would like to attain higher learning during the Middle Ages. The medieval university curriculum consisted initially of the curriculum called the *trivium*, which consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. If we examine *trivium* closely, we can say that the subjects are ordered for teaching competence in communication. This curriculum constituted the core components of what we refer to today as the communication discipline. Eventually, the *trivium* expanded to become *quadrivium* or the subjects pertaining to music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, which, like the *trivium*, are actually "languages" that were utilized in the Middle Ages to acquire higher forms of knowledge. The core of Medieval university education was learning the "languages" needed for

higher learning. This early emphasis on languages will be foundational to the communication discipline.

The traditional or classical humanities are, true to their name, consisting of foundational knowledge that allows the learner to understand the complexities of personal life and social and political institutions around him/her. Ellie Chambers (2001) further describes traditional/classical humanism as follows:

> Traditionally, the avowed aim of humanities study has been to prepare people to participate in social and political life as knowledgeable, impartial, and tolerant individuals …They encouraged all forms of expression, especially the arts, and also the development of what were regarded as the quintessentially human attributes of reason, imagination, and aesthetic sensibility – by their very nature, 'goods' for society no less than for (elite) individuals. Such ideas still inform traditional quality-of-life justifications for the study of a broad arts/humanities curriculum, embracing art, classical studies, culture (including forms of social and political life), drama, history, languages, law, literature, music, philosophy, and religion. (p. 3)

Traditional or classical humanism, as intuited in the Chambers passage, is centered on reason, imagination, and aesthetics and is deeply interiorized in approach. The individual is invited to come to a self-understanding to navigate the expectations of the social world. However, it cannot be denied that classical humanism has been an individual means to social ends; it aims to examine society and its values through the lens of individual worldviews.

Communication and Humanities

In so far as classical humanism is about language and expression, the earliest conception of communication as a field of study had been humanistic in emphasis. The oldest communication theory, Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, concerned how an individual could produce excellent public speeches in ancient Greece. The rhetorical methods of logos (logical design), pathos (audience impact), and ethos (source credibility) are as relevant today as they were during the classical antiquity of the Greek civilization. These confer on the speaker and listener the ethical responsibility of sifting through public speeches and how they deploy argumentation and reasoning.

Through the centuries, rhetoric never really went out of fashion. In fact, recently, it has been extended into a new approach to understanding persuasive communication. Rhetoric was adopted as a core subject in the early mass communication programs and became part of the early curricula of journalism and broadcasting. Rhetoric is usually "theorized," according to Robert Craig (1999), as a "practical art of discourse" (p. 135). He adds that Rhetoric "is useful for explaining why our participation in discourse, especially public discourse, is important and

how it occurs and holds forth the possibility that the practice of communication can be cultivated and improved through critical study and education" (p. 135).

Therefore, the roots of the communication discipline lie in the humanities, as exemplified by the towering contribution of rhetoric, the oldest communication theory. In recent times, it has been revived in Neo-Aristotelianism, with the concept of the "practical art of discourse" (Craig, 1999, p. 135) still an important component of public communication. Rhetoric also promotes traditional humanism's attitude of "disinterested curiosity and inquiry" (Chambers, 2001, p. 3).

The earliest teachers of communication in the United States began as members of the Speech and Drama departments. This is the reason why rhetoric has become a major component of early communication curricula. Early speech teachers, according to Em Griffin (2012), in his book *A First Look at Communication Theory*, a widely acknowledged textbook for undergraduate communication students, developed courses around "public address, oral interpretation of literature, radio announcing, drama, debate, and roundtable discussion", and they drew heavily from the theories of "Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian" (p. 21).

As the decades wore on, the communication field began relying on other persuasions and modes of inquiry along the positivist tradition. Griffin (2012) claims that the split tradition of communication theorizing and inquiry created a fissure existing within the communication discipline from the 1910s up until more recent times. The said fissure is particularly apparent in the division existing between those who hold a humanistic view of communication and those who hold a scientific view of communication (Griffin, 2012, p. 29). While it is said that communication research in the United States has remained positivist to this day, as Griffin has noted, the European tradition of communication and media studies is connected deeply with humanism. In previous decades, C.P. Snow has referred to this division between the humanities and the sciences as "two cultures" (in Cornelius and St. Vincent, Eds., 1964, p. 2); alluding to the great divide between scientists and humanists that created far-reaching implications in the way disciplines are administered in the universities of the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, Craig (1999) demonstrates the dual impulses that animate the communication field by listing down seven traditions of communication theory. Many of these traditions are humanistic, and some are scientific in the way they pursue the subject of their inquiry, the pedagogical principles that affect them, and their modes of inquiry. These are The Rhetorical Tradition, The Semiotic Tradition, The Phenomenological Tradition, The Cybernetic Tradition, The Socio-Psychological Tradition, The Sociocultural Tradition, and The Critical Tradition.

In 1983, the *Journal of Communication* published a special issue addressing the "Ferment in the Field", which touches on the rise of critical theory and research.

The critical view of communication study somehow recuperates the humanist emphasis on capacitating the individual with critical thinking skills that will hopefully assist them in carrying on their function in society and making it more livable and just for humans.

Despite this perceived division between the two tendencies of communication scholars, the humanistic bent has persisted and continued to animate the study of communication through the different eras of communication study, offering a counterpoint to the scientific and objectivist stances of positivist social science.

Today, there are new contexts for humanism's return. The fourth industrial revolution has been attended – so to speak – by the exponential rate of advances in digital technology that created possibilities unheard of before and merely imagined in previous periods. This is characterized, in the words of Klaus Schwab (2016) of the World Economic Forum, by a "fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres" (Schwab, 2016, para 2). The output of this revolution consists of "emerging technology breakthroughs in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things, autonomous vehicles, 3-D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage, and quantum computing" (Schwab, 2016, para 4).

Such a revolution has resulted in a shift in media technologies, epistemic shifts, and, perhaps, the re-mapping of human skills. Media technologies shifted as the technoscape transitioned from analog to digital. This is accompanied by a shift in episteme: from the linear mode of print and the immersive mode of electronic media to the interactive and fragmented mode of digital media. Meanwhile, the alleged re-mapping of skills has occurred as technologies seem to have claimed the function formerly held by humans. Increased automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence created an occasion for revitalizing human skills and for abandoning the routinary in favor of more creative ones.

The UNESCO-published book titled *Media Literacy and New Humanism* (2010), authored by Jose Manuel Perez Tornero and Tapio Varis, has noted that the recent digital revolution has caused a host of challenges to the core ideas of humanity, which consist of autonomy, freedom, and creativity. The prevailing notion – ever since the Fourth Industrial Revolution caused massive shifts in labor cultures, educational systems, governance, and social communications - is that a technology-dependent world will gradually erode those esteemed ideas. UNESCO literature of late addresses this so-called "depersonalizing effects of mass technology" (Perez Tornero & Varis, 2020, p. 5) or what the poet and critic Thomas Sterns Eliot has referred to as the "dissociation of sensibility" of modern men and women.

Such growing concerns over the negative impact of digital technology have necessitated a renewal of the humanist spirit that has animated academic life and research in previous ages. In his Foreword to the *Media Literacy and Humanism*

(2010) manual cited above, UNESCO IITE Director Dendev Badarch said:

> The idea of 'new humanism' has become a new credo for UNESCO. Being applied to education, it suggests the creation of a more inclusive society in which all humans have a chance to access knowledge and quality education and every voice is heard in the universal dialogue. The new humanism in global society must prioritize a new sense of respect for multiplicity and cultural diversity and must support media development with the goal of consolidating the new culture of peace. (p.4)

As the world moves toward a future of unparalleled technological advancements, scholars and thinkers have grown concerned about a scenario dominated by post-humanist issues and realities, a future where humanity is forced to forge its existence in relation to advanced technologies that have been crafted to take over several human functions and skills. In response to this growing concern, efforts such as the above have been conceived and spearheaded by UNESCO as stop-gap measures to arrest this long-term threat to humanity. For this reason, the Asian Media Information Centre convened a conference in 2019 aimed at re-formulating humanism in the face of a technology-saturated future. The following discussion will tackle the historical and conceptual roots of humanism.

Retracing Humanism's Roots

The idea of humanism is old. It is traceable to the Renaissance as an outlook on life, as a school of thought, or as a body of discourse. In the sixteenth century, Renaissance Europe took a renewed interest in the Greek and Roman classics and re-examined man's place in the world.

Several pivotal events influenced Renaissance thought. These events include the following:

1. The expansion of the European empires through the discovery of other continents and lands.

2. The Protestant Reformation

3. The rise of science

4. The invention of printing

5. The rise of the vernaculars

6. The secularization of knowledge, among others

The expansion of European empires and the discovery of other continents became an opening for new inventions and ideas. These flowed from the imperial

centers to the newfound lands. In return, colonial administrations discovered new peoples, specific cultures, and fresh sources for more economic exchange. Despite the subjugation suffered by colonized people, these imperial projects allowed the rest of the world to become aware of other races and the right of people to assert their respective cultural identities. Nationalist movements have been founded on the idea of human value and freedom, and their seminal notions of sovereignty have become the historical and ideological bases for new humanism's respect for cultural diversity and cultural difference.

The Protestant Reformation, coming on the heels of the rise of mass printing and mass literacy, encouraged the private interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. This led to disunity in the Christian Church and contributed to the modern-day idea of denominationalism, which has been an offshoot of fragmentation and diversity of interpretations of the Word of God as expressed in the Bible. This event has become responsible for feeding off a negative consequence of humanism: discarding fifteen hundred years of dependence on Sacred Tradition and the magisterial teaching of the church in favor of independent thinking and private judgment over questions of morality, Christian ethics, and the rule of faith.

The rise of science and scientific thinking allowed key technological inventions to extend human activities and the mobility of communities. Scientific thought emphasized the value of rational thinking and promoted empiricism and positivism. It encouraged the belief in man's rational capabilities and in making practical judgments by inferring from evidence and objective data. The rise of scientific thought contributed to the diminution of the human sciences, with universities in the nineteenth century emphasizing disciplinal protocols, departmentalization, and the development of processes and modes of inquiry unique to disciplinal temperaments.

Meanwhile, the invention of printing democratized access to knowledge and created a condition in which much of Europe's increasing literacy became an avenue for self-determination and rationalism. Mass production of books and the rise of literacy contributed to the humanistic promotion of intellectual enlightenment, the encouragement of free marketplaces of ideas, the personal quest for happiness, and the idea of a moral and ethical system that would support the creation of a just and humane society.

Moreover, the rise of the vernaculars in the sixteenth century contributed greatly to humanism's emphasis on the independence of the people's inquisitive spirit. The rise of the vernaculars – such as the Tuscan language in which Dante Alighieri wrote his opus titled *Divina Commedia* – became a necessary ally to humanism's aspiration to elevate literacy even among non-Latin speaking people and to make knowledge written in the classical languages accessible to as many people as possible via translation.

The secularization of knowledge or the expansion of interest in learning beyond the confines of theology and religious knowledge assisted in developing a curiosity over non-religious and scientific thought. This movement fed off humanism's aspiration for intellectual ascent for all human beings; knowledge being the basis for self-understanding and for discerning the contribution of individual vocations in the shaping of communal spirit.

Of the said historic events, technology seemed to be a major catalyst of change. The technology of shipbuilding, for instance, aided sea voyages and in carrying out the work entailed in expanding imperial projects in the colonies. In addition, the printing technology led to mass literacy and the printing of thousands of copies of the Bible. Also, print technology opened the door for the translation of classical literary works and other forms of secular knowledge into the vernacular languages and resulted in the intellectualization of said vernacular languages.

In other words, during the Renaissance and at the present, the rise of technology (printing, for instance, in the sixteenth century and new media in the twenty-first) led to new modes of thinking. Technology was the catalyst for sixteenth-century proto-modern thought. Similarly, technology has remained to be the driving force for change and innovation in the twenty-first century, thereby creating massive shifts in governance, economy, education, culture, and communications.

Humanism could not have affected human thought other than during the Renaissance. This historical epoch was ripe for embracing change and facilitating transitions. The reinterpretation of the value of humanity was directly and indirectly caused by the new technologies. Most significant to communication and media cultures were the printing technology and the mass dissemination of books. Mass literacy democratized access to education. As an innovation of Renaissance Europe, the book was later joined by other print media forms and genres: newspapers, magazines, penny press, and mass advertising.

The new Humanism is never entirely new. It has always been there – at least as a body of discourse since the 1930s. Modern conceptions of humanism may be ascribed to "a philosophy of life that affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity." ("Cork Humanists," n.d.)

What has happened between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries that we need to recover humanism or define a new one? Each time a new technology is born, humans must adjust their activities. Such alignment of human function has several implications for our ethical lives. Some five hundred years of exponential growth of communication technology have affected humanity in various domains such as lifestyles, workplaces, governance, economy, mobility, and well-being.

The New Humanities or New Humanism can be traced to the literary criticism of a group of scholars in the 19th century who reworked the ethical and moral

philosophies handed down from the period of antiquity. By the 1930s, the Neo-Humanists were chiefly known for their concern "with the ends of literature as affecting man, with literature as it takes its place in the human forum of ideas and attitudes" (Scott, 1962, p. 23). Therefore, what is significant to New Humanism is the centrality of man as they move around the context of the times, which could be the Industrial Revolution, the rise of electronic media, the World Wars, the full impact of modern life, and the postcolonial experiences of nation-states that grew out of the imperial project of the European West since the 16th century. In other words, what we deem as New Humanism today is the continuation of a longer project aimed at recuperating what has been perceived to be a rapture in the history of humanism during the four industrial revolutions.

The religious systems and cultural beliefs of Asia have always been considered a major source of humanist philosophical thought. The ancient civilizations of India and China have grounded their moral philosophy in the teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Hinduism upholds that humans possess godly qualities. For Hinduism, humans are deeply connected to the quest for inner happiness. Das Basu (1990) claims that "Hinduism believes that God speaks through supermen and also that such saviors are incarnations of God Himself, descending to humanity as occasion arises during days of the darkest gloom" (p. 1). Buddhism, on the other hand, complements Hinduism in a sense through its emphasis on causality, hierarchical relationships, and the rules of propriety (Tanlayco, Lecture, April 21, 2001). Other ethical systems from Asia, like Taoism, Confucianism, and Daoism, privilege humanity's conscious walk toward perfection and happiness. Some core teachings of said Asian philosophies tend to cohere with some components of the Renaissance or Western humanism and the New Humanist movement from North America in the 1930s. They meet and converge in areas such as personal and social ethics, the quest for human happiness and good, and the natural belief of humans in a transcendent power or entity or their affinity to metaphysical things.

The religious, ethical, and philosophical systems in Asia and those drawn from Western humanism contributed greatly to recent calls for the re-examination of the impact of the technologies brought forth by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Inevitably, these must also inform the crafting of new directions for the study of communication and media.

Contexts for New Humanism in Communication and Media Studies

We are at this juncture in world history where renewing our faith in humanity has become imperative on account of the many changes wrought by the fourth industrial revolution. However, it pays to re-understand what past industrial eras

have contributed to our current understanding of the discipline of communication and media studies and the ecology that animate the practice of the communication profession.

The first industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and North America was greatly assisted by the discovery of the use of water and steam power, which led to the mechanization of industries. The second industrial revolution, which took place between 1870 and 1914, featured steel, oil, electricity, and combustion engines. It led to the mass production of goods.

Meanwhile, the third industrial revolution from the 1980s was the Digital Revolution, and its main technologies were personal computers and the Internet. It is meant to hasten automation. Lastly, the fourth industrial revolution in the twenty-first century saw the advance of Augmented Reality, big data, robotics, the Internet of Things, blockchain, and crypto. Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, said that the fourth industrial revolution "is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres" (2016, para 2).

The renewed call for humanism has been augured by the shifts in consciousness brought about by the fourth industrial revolution. The first led to the mass printing of books, newspapers, and periodicals that gave birth to mass advertising and the breaking down of boundaries between high culture and popular culture. Mechanization is at the heart of mass printing, which, in Walter Benjamin's opinion, has changed the perception of the masses toward art. The second led to the rise of broadcast media and created what Marshall McLuhan refers to as a "global village." It massified media consumption and increased the need for assembly line concepts and genre recycling.

Meanwhile, the third industrial revolution was digital and led to nonlinear production and consumption of content, opening a highway where anyone could partake. It led to automatization of communication, encouraging interactivity and ease of access. Subsequently, the fourth industrial age conceived of technologies not as mere extensions of humans but sometimes as replacements for humans. People are sometimes depersonalized and forced to adjust their skills to new technologies, creating new kinds of knowledge, literacies, jobs, and professions. In this context, humans could sometimes be held hostage by technology into a mode of work that is mechanized, emotionless, and corporatized.

New Humanism may address the implications of the fourth industrial revolution (such as depersonalization) that are also confounded by the impact and residue of the other three industrial revolutions (mechanization, massification, automatization). This may be done by understanding the histories and cultural outcomes of the three previous industrial revolutions. Understanding how we

come to this point is important in addressing the fate of humanity in the foreseeable future. As Schwab opines: "There has never been a time of greater promise, or one of greater potential peril" (2016, para 30).

In a UNESCO document titled *A New Humanism for the 21st Century*, UNESCO Director-General Irene Bokova (2010) has outlined the following concrete actions designed to promote the new humanism amid the fourth industrial revolution:

1. Self-fashioning

2. As a collective requirement

3. Building a global community

4. Implementing tangible projects as key to mutual understanding, stability, and development.

For Bokova, the new humanism begins with an individual response to modern life and its attendant problems. Fashioning a sense of self amidst the increasingly dehumanizing factors in modern life would mean understanding and believing in the capacity of the individual to make sense of social change and one's imaginative response towards it. An example was Leonardo da Vinci's reading of his times during the Renaissance and what he felt to be his multiple roles in it. In da Vinci's estimation, humanity is never about limits but rather a limitless potential. Such affirmative action and an almost Utopian impulse to insist on humanity's place in an increasingly mechanized and massified living – as in the case of the Renaissance culture of Da Vinci's time – is required to have a revolutionary insight into the order of things. Da Vinci defied disciplinary boundaries and dipped his fingers in almost every field of knowledge: art, biography, engineering, astronomy, etcetera. As a man of multiple literacies, Da Vinci proved to be a fine exemplar of self-fashioning. His example, too, demonstrated how self-fashioning requires a creative response to any sort of change or shift in modes of thought.

The New Humanities, extending the solitary and autonomous engagement associated with old or traditional/classical humanities, proposes that all scholars work for a particular community, putting to actual use all the constructs and concepts held in great esteem by the humanists. As the UNESCO Secretary-General Bokova (2010) has said: "Individuals become whole in society, as members of a community" (p. 3).

Meanwhile, the same UNESCO document cites the global emphasis on New Humanism. As Bokova (2010) further opines, "Being a humanist today means building bridges between North, South, East, and West and strengthening the human community to take up our challenges together" (p. 4). The building of an international human community, though, may be accomplished through the following suggestions: (1) Building bridges and strengthening the human

community to take up challenges together; (2) Access to quality education; (3) Scientific cooperation; and (4) Projecting culture as rapprochement and as means to a shared vision. These efforts at building community, education, and cooperation are important in combatting the dehumanizing impact of technology.

These specific features of new humanism, however, require new modes of inquiry that may take any of the following forms:

1. The introduction of inclusivity, mixed methods, and the reflexive approach to research methods may help achieve the aspiration to bridge bridges between cultures and strengthen a global human community.

2. The consideration that may be paid to how knowledge is produced, circulated, and consumed as part of the problematics of new humanistic education.

3. The commitment of new humanities to seek other voices by striking international cooperation and collaboration with other disciplines.

4. The premium paid on multiculturalism to address the concepts of pluralism, diversity, and difference that are prevalent as a condition of our postmodern life.

Pursuing projects that address the idea of humanitarian commitment is paramount in the UNESCO declaration. Tangible and intangible world heritage must serve as monuments and sites where a common understanding can take root. New humanities may take advantage of its affinity with visual art, architecture and design, and literary and performative arts to make a case for universal respect for diverse ideas and expressions. Of critical importance to new humanism is the specific application of the idea of social humanism, where humanistic ideals may converge with social action through policymaking, advocacy, teaching, research dissemination, and extension activities.

In recent decades, university curricula have been adjusted to accommodate the innovations being required by the third industrial revolution, which is given over to digital technology, and the fourth industrial revolution, which has required human skills and potential to adjust to the changes introduced by advanced technologies. Making these new adjustments also means re-introducing a humanism that can strike a balance between and among the impact of interactivity, interface, and computing.

Crafting Global Research Agenda

In recent decades, the drive to build research institutions and universities has become a means to jumpstart a knowledge economy that is systematic, methodical, balanced, and impactful. Creating research universities means creating loci for

specialized knowledge. However, the move to revitalize humanism may help balance the two tendencies of twenty-first-century university education, which include the emphasis on specialization and the use of technology in rendering the various disciplines more relevant to the times. On such two accounts, the new humanities may aid in counteracting the fragmentation of knowledge and the depersonalizing effect of technology.

The 1998 UN World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century: Vision and Action and Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development in Higher Education notes in its preamble the crucial role of new technologies in updating the framework for education in the twenty-first century. One of the missions and functions of higher education, says the 1998 Declaration, is "to advance, create and disseminate knowledge through research and provide, as part of its service to the community, relevant expertise to assist societies in cultural, social and economic development, promoting and developing scientific and technological research as well as research in the social sciences, the humanities, and the creative arts" (https://unesdoc.unesco.org).

In the classical sense, a university can never be a university without a liberal arts college. In other words, the humanities have always been the foundation of university education. This is true of the Universities of Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge from the Middle Ages. Harvard College, founded in 1636, began as a Liberal Arts college but, beginning in 1890, gave birth to separate departments that catered to the various disciplines.

In the eighteenth century, some higher education institutions immediately began as research universities, as exemplified by the University of Gottingen, the University of Berlin, Johns Hopkins University, Clark University, Stanford University, and the University of Chicago. As the universities tended toward specialization, the humanities have been relegated to a minor position. As fragmented as the curricula have been, the role of the humanities in the various fields has gradually been obscured.

Meanwhile, the two tracks of humanistic communication research that have been referred to earlier as part of Craig's seven traditions are crucial in re-mapping communication and media studies under the banner of the new industrial era. These tracks include the phenomenological tradition and the critical tradition. As applied to communication, phenomenology trains its lens in the unique way people make sense of their common experiences, interpret them, and negotiate them according to their specific subjectivities. The phenomenological exercise can be self-reflexive, meaning it can reflect on its own methods, an option that the positivist sciences seem to evince. On the other hand, critical tradition sees the interconnection between power and communication and highlights the potential of discourse in influencing social action.

Be that as it may, how can the new humanities help craft a more relevant research agenda for communication? The new humanities may function as guiding epistemology or as a way of approaching knowledge. It could offer a way of making sense of the world. An example of the critical tradition is historicism, which tries to understand the past and its contexts as a way of explaining the present. Specific examples of this include the following:

1. The revitalization of media history courses through poststructuralist, deconstruction, and postcolonial approaches; or,

2. Approaching communication and media theories from the perspective of communication and media history.

Similarly, the contribution of qualitative social sciences such as constructionism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics may help remind us that subjective interpretation of phenomena is inextricable from being an individual in the world or an inquirer deeply rooted in one's discourse environment.

Critical theory and research afforded by Marxist and Neo-Marxist Approaches, Structuralism and Semiotics, Post-structuralism, Deconstruction, and Postcolonial theory will continue to remind scientists, industry leaders, policymakers, and academics that social and cultural change should always benefit humanity. More than the ease, comfort, speed, and efficiency of technological breakthroughs, human flourishing is the greater aim of cultural change.

Research Agenda for Communication and Media Studies from the New Humanist Perspective

Therefore, any research agenda for communication and media studies from the New Humanist perspective should come from three broad perspectives that somehow point to the direction of the discourse globally. These are race, class, and gender.

The discourse on race could put the Asian perspective on many research agendas that are sometimes still operating around Western or received theory. This will also address the postcolonial argument and trauma of nations after the colonial moment or at the conclusion of Western imperialist projects. This will also help rationalize efforts to pursue nation-building projects.

The discourse in class could tackle concepts of global labor and capital in the age of late capitalism and as the world confronts issues of migration, diaspora, information divides, and climate change.

The discourse on gender could address issues of inclusivity and the cultural roots of gender difference. The New Humanist perspective will assist in filling the gaps in gender discourse.

Re-inserting humanism in programs of communication and media studies will, however, bear some implications on the following:

1. Deploying the continuing relevance of Rhetoric and humanistic theories and research frameworks: This would allow us to counter the problem of manipulative speech, fake news, disinformation, and misinformation.

2. Ensuring the influence of phenomenological and hermeneutical traditions will enrich the literature on the varieties of communication cultures and the hermeneutic approaches and their balancing effect on mainstream discourse.

3. Acknowledging the contribution of structuralist, semiotic, and poststructuralist frameworks: This will help ensure that humanity will still be at the core of contemporary technological innovations and that the threat of a post-humanist future may, however, be contained by countering master/dominant narratives and unraveling new voices from other sectors of the world communication cultures.

New Humanism in the context of communication research can be achieved by first conceiving a historical framework and learning from the past by comparing revolutionary media periods. Secondly, New Humanism in communication and media studies could be pursued by identifying the needs and challenges of the present.

As already mentioned, a certain dose of historicism is important in understanding the need for new humanism. Renaissance humanism and twenty-first-century humanism had certain parallels and departures. Renaissance thinkers' first reaction to societal changes was to promote humanism. This can strike some parallels with how twenty-first-century media generations have reacted to revolutionary changes in the technological, social, and cultural spheres during their time.

Under Renaissance humanism, human beings occupied the center of the world. In twenty-first-century humanism, people extend their function through the media of communication. The human senses find their extension in several components of the print, electronic, and digital media: the eyes through the linearity of the print medium, the sensory experiences through electronic media, and the interactive, nonlinear, immersive, but fragmented experience through the digital media.

Classical humanism promoted free and critical interpretation of classical texts during the Renaissance. In the twenty-first century, it is hoped that New Humanism could be at the forefront in rationalizing the use of technology in our lives while also holding a critical attitude toward it.

Furthermore, classical humanism fostered individual autonomy during the Renaissance and discouraged conventional thought. This resulted in beautiful

inventions, works of art, and profound ideas. In the twenty-first century, New Humanism can foster a sense of autonomy to combat global communication's tendency to engender ideological and doctrinaire thought, apathy, and cultural pluralism.

Likewise, classical humanism provided the intellectual fuel that helped the imperial powers justify discovering new worlds across ocean seas. This action became the launching pad for the conquest of then-yet uncharted lands, including much of Asia. In the twenty-first century, New Humanism can promote a renewed respect for the sovereignty of various states and nations, the cultural diversity they embody, and the distinct cultural identities they have constructed.

Moreover, Renaissance humanism promoted the classical idea of a cosmopolitan, universal citizen possessing clear rights and responsibilities. In the twenty-first century, New Humanism can promote the revival of such a notion. It can re-ignite the full flowering of humanity the way it did in the sixteenth century. In ushering in an age of new humanism, one can be mindful of the expectations that will attend the unraveling of the Fifth Industrial Revolution. Pratik Gauri and Jim Van Eerden of the World Economic Council have foreseen a new industrial age that will be responsive to the twenty-first century in so far as it acknowledges the connection between innovation and high-minded moral purpose. Quoting Gauri and Van Eerden:

In the end, it all comes down to people and values. We need to shape a future that works for all of us by putting people first and empowering them. In its most pessimistic, dehumanized form, the Fourth Industrial Revolution may indeed have the potential to "robotize" humanity and thus to deprive us of our heart and soul. But as a complement to the best parts of human nature – creativity, empathy, and stewardship – it can also lift humanity into a new collective and moral consciousness based on a shared sense of destiny. It is incumbent on us all to make sure the latter prevails (2016, para 31).

Technology with moral clarity means taking control of our destiny as humanity, which the likes of new humanists like Irving Babbit, Stuart Sherman, and Paul Elmer Moore articulated in the 1930s. It means re-asserting a new humanist agenda for communication research, which translates into committed social science and free and imaginative humanism. This takes into consideration the universal aims of the sustainable development goals and the transcendent superiority of humanity over everything else. This can use mixed methods as the agency of social research in communication and the critical framework of humanist communication and media research. This means that the macro-framework of recuperating the human from the post-humanist tendency of depersonalized technology should complement the micro-framework of communication research approaches where the subject of inquiry is not only the impact of technology on man but also the continuing re-assertion of human talent and will. This is supposed to be the true

face of innovation and change. Simply put, insisting on humanistic communication and media studies could complement the evolving discourse of a purported fifth revolution, which, at its core, should be more than industrial. It should be a revolution that locates the human person as both agency and beneficiary of a social and cultural revolution of a different – albeit superior- kind.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the pressing need to re-examine the ideals of new humanism in re-creating a new media culture dominated by the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It has compared the current ideas of new humanism with Renaissance humanism and, in so doing, realized that many of the concepts of sixteenth-century humanism persist to this day. While the scientific community could suggest new contexts for a digitized world, one should not abandon the sobering influence of the humanistic view. Because of the legacies of Renaissance humanism and the insights gained from new humanism, there has been a perceived need for a new research agenda for communication and media studies, surely ones that attend to the promises of the new technologies and at the same attentive to maintaining the humanizing impact of their utility, applications, and purpose.

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