

Editor's letter

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Welcome to the first edition of *Humanities Directory*. The first question a reader might ask after glancing at the masthead is: "Why another Directory devoted to the humanities; don't we have enough of these already"?

There is really no one answer to this question, but several answers. While a number of publications and online directories have sprung up over the years, the sad truth is that interest in the humanities is waning, particularly outside of academic circles. Secondly, while other publications have developed in recent years, few combine the reach of open access, with the quick time to publication that we can provide at the *Humanities Directory*. Similarly, the level of scholarly review is quite good, and we have an editorial staff that is literally worldwide in scope, providing the breadth of scholarship that ensures a quick, fair and competent review of submitted work.

Being an open access publisher, we are able to provide an outlet for papers which might be considered too controversial or *outré* for other publications. Consider our lead article, "The Ballad of Derpy Hooves: Transgressive Fandom in *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*", which might have escaped publication in a more traditional medium. Fortunately for the *Humanities Directory* and for the fans of the *My Little Pony* series, Dr. Christopher Bell submitted his erudite article which explores the interplay of fandom with traditional media outlets, to *Humanities Directory*. We hope that this article will lead to future publications which explore the relationship of traditional media with fanbases that are becoming increasingly vocal and which seek an interactive relationship with their favorite programming.

In a way, Dr. Bell's article speaks to the role that *Humanities Directory* wishes to play in the open access sector. We, like the "bronies" mentioned in Dr. Bell's article, seek to engage our readers in an interactive discussion; one which encourages divergent viewpoints and sensibilities.

Also appearing in our initial edition is a cogent, insightful review of Artemy Kalinofsky's book *The Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, written by Dr Johanna Granville. I have read other reviews of Kalinofsky's book, but none match the level of insight that Dr Granville's review attains. In fact, I can offer no higher praise of her review than to say it will compel me to buy Kalinofsky's book; no mean feat.

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2. Ponzio

Finally, we are pleased to present an editorial submitted by Dr Arputharaj Devaraj which discusses the current state of higher education in India today. The article discusses the tension between expectations of parents, and the frustration felt by students who may have different thoughts about the value of their education. This tension is certainly felt in many areas of the world today, and highlights the changing attitudes regarding the value of education, and a specifically liberal education, in the minds of the general populace.

Perhaps at no other time in history has the value of a liberal education come under such intense scrutiny. Yet, at the same time, the requirement for a liberal education has never been more keenly felt. In much of the world there is a tendency toward quick, easy, satisfying answers. Such answers are a mere chimera: they simply don't exist. The value of a liberal education lies in the fact that it imparts a background which enables students and practitioners a means of formulating substantive questions which require thoughtful, well-articulated answers, not the sound bites which have become so popular with televised newscasts.

I hope you enjoy our inaugural issue of *Humanities Directory*, and that you will become engaged with us as we seek to formulate articulate questions, and search for informed answers. I remain,

Yours,

Peter Ponzio, Editor
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