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That Philanthropic Studies is appropriately pursued as a humanities subject is first of all clear from the scope and focus of its subject. Human giving and the traditions that surround it address at least one of the originating ideas in Western Civilization – that the purpose of human life is self-knowledge. As mentioned before [in reference to *Humanities and Democratic Criticism* (2004), Edward Said has asked for an interactive and other-oriented dimension to be added to self-knowledge, one that he identifies as self-criticism, but one which might just as easily be seen as concern for and respect for others, that part of showing regard for all things human that Bilgrami [in the “Foreward” to *Humanities and Democratic Criticism*] included in his definition of the humanities. If “Know thyself” is one pillar of humanism, then perhaps “Love thy Neighbor” or some equivalent affirmation of the place and importance of others in our destinies and happiness is the other. Philanthropic Studies is the discipline that encompasses both of these elements of human experience. It does not exclusively or exhaustively focus on these matters, but its concerns, its subject areas are co-extensive with these values and concepts.

All the elements of philanthropy’s definitions look toward an other-oriented world, thus ensuring that Philanthropic Studies, the discipline that reflects on these acts of giving and volunteering, will engage its world and be an interactive and communal activity. Philanthropic Studies’ first interactive and communal activity is likely to be participation in and contribute to the public or community conversation that all members of a society and citizens in a civil society have about what constitutes the common, public good. The results of that conversation necessarily lead to determinations about what actions, perhaps by governments on the one hand

and businesses on the other, are appropriate for the society to undertake, all the while keeping in mind the need to include the recipients of the giving in that conversation. The concern and respect for the distinctive features, values, and traditions of disparate peoples and cultures, in Said's terms, marks Philanthropic Studies as a humanities activity and so it is appropriate and helpful to accept it as such.

Philanthropic Studies also needs to be understood as a centralizing discipline in the humanities because it requires a reflective and generalizing practice that encompasses an aspect and an aspiration of most human peoples in most times. Focusing as it does on the aspirations and traditions of people attempting to relieve suffering and build a better world, Philanthropic Studies gathers within itself the other-oriented elements of most human activities without appropriating or duplicating the work of other humanities disciplines. Philanthropic Studies offers an opportunity for humanities inquiry to approach the globalizing perspectives and extensive assertions about meaning that humanism had to back off from when all it had to support its claim for authority was a received, tacit understanding that "human" was an *a priori* concept and that the humanities were defined as the collection of areas studying aspects of what is human. Philanthropic Studies moves toward globalizing, encompassing perspectives because its subject reaches widely toward all peoples and eras and deeply to core aspirations of people. It moves toward these totalizing positions because its analysis of individual acts of giving creates a need for broader theories and at each level the increasing complexity of its work requires yet broader theories.

This movement to a globalizing perspective approximates the movement described in information theory and in its applications to biological processes in which simple systems (like pendulums) and complicated systems (like clocks) become complex systems when their

principles of operation are articulated. Systems become more complex as they develop a mechanism for replicating themselves and so create a broader, more encompassing system. This process of self-organizing systems, the most dramatic example being the human brain, suggests how the movement to broader, more global perspectives is an appropriate and authoritative step for a discipline. When Philanthropic Studies moves from pursuit of questions about giving by humans to explanations of broader values and traditions that shape these aspirations to make a difference, it generates valid and productive ideas that fulfill the aspirations to bring new knowledge to bear on the “other.” Philanthropic Studies rises to a level of generality greater than other humanities disciplines because its area and its aspirations move beyond self-knowledge to the critique of how self-knowledge should apply to the welfare of society in general. This second, most complex, and perhaps highest pursuit engaging most people approximates the work of Philanthropic Studies.

This case for Philanthropic Studies being most properly a humanities discipline and a centralizing field of study for all humanities pursuits leads to an optimistic prospect for the work not only that Philanthropic Studies does, but for all the work that humanities disciplines produce. That is, the nature of the area studied within Philanthropic Studies, knowing oneself enough to be in a position to gather with others to do good for others, suggests that these inquiries will lead to applications, new questions and answers, and improved practices in the world; in short, making the world a better place. The “other” orientation that suffuses Philanthropic Studies and exists potentially in all humanities disciplines orders and shapes this work to be incomplete until it unites its disciplined inquiries with the problems that generated the inquiry in the first place. Philanthropic Studies and other humanities disciplines have a responsibility and an opportunity to bring authoritative and effective work to bear upon a world that needs relief and improvement.

The globalizing and commanding perspective of the humanities, and especially Philanthropic Studies, will meet the challenge of postmodernism by developing a set of assertions about human experience and human aspirations through an increasingly complex set of inquiries rather than from an a priori set of received assumptions about what it means to be human. While certainly regarding its knowledge as operational and contingent, these humanities inquiries are needed and valuable within the academy and in human societies.

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