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Preface

As a result of the outbreak of the Covid-19, the border restrictions and lockdowns were imposed around the world that severely affected the Study Abroad Programs. In order to search for some ways to maintain our students' interaction with the overseas learners and to provide overseas exposure the International Affairs Office at School of Letters/Graduate School of Humanities (then Graduate School of Letters) started a project that includes semi-academic seminar (hybrid) and subsequent publication of proceedings. The international seminar was divided into two sessions: special lectures, panel discussion by the educators and researchers and students' presentation with open discussion, completely in English without any translation. Almost all the first hand work presented in the seminars were revised and published in the form of proceedings with ISBN code. The project aimed to provide free space in which new ideas could be developed through discussions and intellectual interactions. Furthermore, it targeted to contribute to fostering the next generation of scholars who would be armed with interdisciplinary knowledge to contribute to achieving the sustainability goals.

Until 2022 four such international seminars could be organized followed by proceedings publication. The fourth and recent most seminar was held during late October 2022. The success of this project could be surmised by observing that the department chose this project as one of the projects for Osaka University's Master Plan 2027. The selection process of the papers from the fourth international seminar was changed. To maintain quality of the papers presented in the international seminar all the papers must go through double blind peer-review process. Furthermore, the revised version of the papers presented in the seminar, once again have to pass the peer-review selection process.

The theme of the fourth International seminar was "International Exchange in the Age of Society 5.0: An Interdisciplinary Seminar for Young Scholars". One key note and two special lectures on Digital Humanities (DH) and Society 5.0 were delivered. The keynote is included in this proceedings as "Society 5.0, Digital Humanities, and Indology". The first special lecture was delivered by Dr. Nirmala Menon the then Professor and Chair at School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of English, Indian Institute of Technology Indore (India), on the topic "Digital Humanities: Asia and India". She leads the Digital Humanities and Publishing Research Group at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indore. She is the author of *Migrant Identities of Creole Cosmopolitans: Transcultural Narratives of Contemporary Postcoloniality* (Peter Lang Publishing, Germany, 2014) and *Remapping the Postcolonial Canon: Remap, Reimagine, Retranslate* (Palgrave Macmillan, UK 2017). The second special lecture was delivered by Dr. Mauro Carassai the then Associate Professor of DH and Associate Chair, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies and Liberal Studies Department of English at California State University, Northridge (United States). His scholarly work has been published in journals such as

Culture Machine, *LEA Almanac*, *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, and *ADA – A Journal of Gender Media and Technology*. He co-edited a double issue for the *Digital Humanities Quarterly* titled “Futures of Digital Studies” and he is currently at work on two manuscripts, one exploring problems and perspectives in configuring an Ordinary Digital Philosophy, and another on the relation between current DH practices and various humanistic traditions. A summary of the special lectures is given below.

Professor Menon talked about DH in the context of Asia with special reference to India. She highlighted two projects in India, *Project Bichitra*, a digital variorum of Rabindranath Tagore’s works which is considered the pioneer of DH in India, and *Project Madurai*, a digitised collection of Tamil poets. She discussed about regional turn in DH in Asia at large and in India in particular and argued that the DH in this region does not follow the same linear trajectory that one may read about in the texts as it was born in North America or in Europe. Further, she emphasized that NLP (National Language Processing) based projects are very important and shall be given extra attention. She also asserted the need to develop the script beyond the Unicode, for example, Devanagari and Dravidian scripts in context of India are very significant for the NLP-based projects.

Professor Menon further stressed on the importance of scholarly publication. According to Prof. Menon, “while publishing in India has taken off on a very large scale and translation publishing both in Indian languages as well as in English, intra-translations between languages are very robust and strong and the translation publishing industry is very strong. However, we don’t see the same kind of enthusiasm or investment in scholarly publishing in these languages so scholarly publishing still tends to be very much in English, so we are dependent on the large publishing conglomerates around the world which all of us are familiar with and we publish in those journals, in those areas and mostly in English. However, if we think about diversifying and democratizing scholarly publishing output it is important to develop a multilingual publishing infrastructure.” Besides, she talked about many other projects going on in different higher education institutions in India. While giving reference to the electronic literature and such, she threw light on the efforts that are being made by the scholars in India to further develop the field of DH.

Dr. Carassai also referred to Society 5.0 while talking about Digital Humanism in Humanistic Tradition(s). He discussed his ongoing research project and forthcoming book *Digital Humanism History's Theories and Practices*. In his talk Dr. Carassai gave an overall picture of his forthcoming book by raising several important questions that need special attention of the scholars and students of the DH. He started his talk by highlighting the need for a scholarly discussion on “digital humanism,” rather than exclusively digital humanities, and further expanded his discussion by throwing light on ancient Greece, medieval, post-renaissance and modern society in terms of understanding the evolution. He referred to how quick transition has taken place in the scholarly debate where topics like the internet digital age, the electronic age, the information age, the computer era and

such could be seen frequently. Further, he pointed out and questioned that in the present century, twenty years into this century, we talk about posthumanism, transhumanism, neohumanism, and critical humanism without an in-depth and accurate reflection on what humanism should look like in the age of digital technologies.

Dr. Carassai further explored the place for digital humanism in the current society while stressing the need to understand its relationship with the pre-existing traditions. He proposes three tasks that the digital humanists should be taking into account: how the works of Renaissance writers are being reconfigured by digital technologies; how to protect digital humanism against new versions of a reliance on metaphysical computational knowledge; and how to maintain critical thinking within current DH debates. Furthermore, he hinted at where are we going to go in the future. I hope Dr. Carassai's forthcoming book would clarify many questions and prove to be a very good reference for the DH scholars.

The international seminar proved to be a setting for discussing future steps and exploring new avenues of research in the age of Society 5.0. We highly appreciate the speakers and all the participants for their support and encouraging comments. Our special thanks with appreciation to Prof. Menon and Dr. Carassai for their valuable time and great contribution to the seminar. We also thank our foreign participants and everyone for their direct and indirect support. We express our special gratitude to Professor Michitaka MORIMOTO, Professor Youji ASAMI, Professor Akemi BANSE and Professor Gyoukou RIN for their great cooperation and reviewing the papers despite their busy schedule. We cannot forget to thank Mr. Yutaka MINEKURA (Special Appointed Researcher, Graduate School of Humanities, Osaka University) for designing a nice poster and Ms. Saki HIROSAWA (Office staff of the International Affairs Office) for extending logistic support. It is our pleasant duty to acknowledge the financial support from the International Affairs Office, School of Letters/Graduate School of Humanities, Osaka University.

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