

## For the Construction of a New Humanities

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The Faculty of Letters, Hiroshima University, has had profound pride in its long history of great academic achievements for, and contributions to, the continuity and development of the traditional disciplines in the field of humanities, and I think the history of those research and educational activities has been highly regarded in each discipline: philosophy, history, and literature. We have really been basking in the high estimation of our faculty which our predecessors, both teachers and students, have obtained by their eminent work and endeavors for long years, up to the present, for the growth and prosperity of our faculty.

We have honestly to admit, however, that something happened in the past twenty years in terms of the way we see the world and human experiences, that is, our epistemology: some radical paradigm shifts have occurred in the world of human sciences, events which were instigated by such efforts to change our conventional value system as New Historicism, Multiculturalism, Postcolonialism, Ecocentrism, and so on. Thus, the Graduate School of Letters was a memorable product not only of our awareness of those paradigm shifts but also of our sincere and swift efforts to face and respond to them. Needless to say, we should not simply discard the solid mould of traditional disciplines just for their outmodedness, because research must not be affected by the fashion of the age in which it is pursued, and further because a seed of something new always comes out of the continuity of tradition: a new idea will be born of the dissemination, or investment, of traditional things.

We should keep in mind, however, the universal fact that a long tradition sometimes tends to become an inflexible, customary road which constrains our way of thinking and seeing. We can unwittingly be prisoners of such an insidious tradition. It may happen that, as a result of our excessive respect for tradition and continuity, we could ironically become blind and insensitive to the movements around us. Yet fortunately we could grasp the opportunity, two years ago, to renovate our Faculty of Letters, which was newly born as the Graduate School of Letters in April 2001, a rebirth manifesting our eagerness to change ourselves, if necessary, according to the social demands for integrating the core fields of the human sciences—philosophy, history, and literature—and to form interdisciplinary or

crossdisciplinary new human sciences, those which are in line with the globally prevalent current of paradigm shifts.

Such sincere efforts have been fulfilled in the establishment of the Department of Integrated Humanities, a unique independent department, probably the only one among national universities and colleges, which is expected to create and develop new types of humanities. In quest of such integrated humanities, the department finally launched a research journal entitled *Hiroshima Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities*. It is an attempt not only to deepen and develop the traditional discipline and create a new paradigm in the field of the human sciences, but also to display the results of our research and dispatch them all over the world from now on. I do hope this newly published journal will be developed fully enough to cope with the globalization of cultural studies.