



The Update

Centre for the Humanities

Spring 2014



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Centre for the Humanities: Moving Forward

The Centre for the Humanities is now entering its second official five-year cycle of activities. After the pioneering moment in 2007-8 and first five-year cycle, with the successful implementation of the [Treaty of Utrecht programme](#) since 2009, we move forward to a new phase of work.

The Centre has become established as a platform for interdisciplinary and interfaculty dialogue at Utrecht University and as a critical think-tank about academic knowledge and the social relevance and the value of the Humanities in the contemporary world. CfH is a flexible and fast-moving instrument that is capable of mobilizing human and material resources to address urgent contemporary questions and provides quick and timely interventions in the public debate, through a number of concrete target-oriented activities. In this regard CfH functions as the incubator, the academic interlocutor and the disseminator for pioneering, innovative interdisciplinary research and research training activities in the Humanities as a supra-disciplinary area.

The golden rule for CfH in the next as in the previous phase is collaboration. All projects are developed and implemented in cooperation with researchers, groups, teaching programmes, institutes and centers in the Faculty and across Utrecht University, like the [Descartes Centre](#). Moreover, CfH works closely and will further develop its connection to the

four Utrecht [Strategic Areas](#), notably 'Institutions' and 'Youth and Identity'. CfH has also built an extensive network of non-academic partners in society at large.

In the next five years CfH aims to continue and to expand this mission in two main directions: on the one hand we will continue to explore the social relevance of the Humanities and on the other we want to reflect on the new forms of interdisciplinary knowledge production today. The Centre's activities will be developed accordingly within two key themes: the social and cultural analysis of citizenship within the Humanities and the 'new' Humanities with special emphasis on the relationship to contemporary science and technology.

Within these themes the Centre's activities will focus firstly on issues such as: the cultural roots of citizenship, questions of diversity and tolerance, new perspectives on Europe after the financial crisis; the role of religion in the public sphere; globalised conflicts and humanitarianism, new social movements and the new media.



Special emphasis will be placed on 'digital citizenship' and the role that cultural images and representations play in the production of the social imaginary through the arts and media, documentaries, films, computer games and internet applications. Secondly we want to reflect on the theories and practices of the Humanities today; on the methodology and the epistemology of the field and on issues that stimulate the public perception of the value and relevance of the Humanities. The CfH will sponsor pilot projects in the new interdisciplinary areas of research, notably the Environmental and the Digital Humanities.

The European dimension of our work is and will remain capital. CfH is a founding member and holds the secretariat of ECHIC, the [European Consortium of Humanities Institutes and Centres](#). In that capacity we have played a crucial role in setting up the European Alliance for the Humanities and Social Sciences (EASSH), which is lobbying the European Commission. CfH was also a founding member of the recently formed [European Environmental Humanities Alliance](#) (EEHA), which is coordinating this fast-growing field. In the next phase we are planning to work more closely with the Humanities group within [LERU](#) (League of European Research

Universities) so as to increase synergy and lobbying power.

CfH aims to continue operating as a curiosity-driven, content-based, socially responsible, dynamic platform to explore the immense resources of the Humanities in the twenty-first century. We look forward to welcoming you to our programme of activities.

[Rosi Braidotti](#)
Director of the Centre for the Humanities



What Are We Good For?

The conference on [‘The Idea of University and the Future of Knowledge’](#) is the closing event to commemorate the [300th Anniversary of the Treaty of Utrecht](#). It also concludes the cycle of visiting professors who were appointed on the [Treaty of Utrecht Chair](#), endowed in 2009 by the Utrecht Province and hosted by the Centre for the Humanities since.

The Chair was founded to highlight the relevance of the Treaty of Utrecht in current European issues like the social responsibility of the University, sustainability, cultural diversity, dialogue, democratic criticism, intellectual inspiration and cultural diplomacy.

More and more universities are starting to ask a or maybe the basic question: what are we good for?

Recently a group of leading scholars at Utrecht University launched an initiative called [Science in Transition](#). One of their main recommendations

is that universities need new checks and balances in the scientific system. Science should be valued substantially more for its societal impact; what does research contribute to our society; scholars should not be driven by the rat race of publication for publication’s sake; someone can have a high score on the H-Index, and still no one can clearly see why his or her research matters.

The debate about ‘valorisation’ of science in the European research arena is dominated by a false dichotomy: on the one side of the

spectrum there is ‘curiosity driven research’, on the other side there is something like ‘society driven’.

The curiosity driven advocates tend to defend their ‘free’ research agenda in terms of the genius: leave us alone, and we will come up with smashing results that will change the world. We are like Einstein, you’ll just wait and see. Three questions: (1) How many of our scholars are Einsteins? (2) How long do we have to wait? And (3) what will we see?

The so-called ‘society driven’ research tends to be a box for all those scholars in the university who do ‘applied research’, which is still a rather dirty word. But anyone can see that

research that is concerned with urgent or pressing matters within our world needs to be driven by curiosity. If we have the answers beforehand, we don’t need research anyway.

I would like to be the advocate for a university where curiosity driven agendas should always make it very clear why scholars are doing what they are doing. If we cannot be transparent about our contribution to society – even if there will be results on the longer term – the world outside academia can ask the basic question: why should we give you money anyway?

Let’s rethink our mission, let’s rethink our inner system. The Centre for the Humanities that my faculty proudly hosts, has been doing a great job, constantly asking critical questions, linking academia to a bigger and more challenging world than H-Indexes. Thanks to Rosi Braidotti and her team, we have a critical think-tank at our university.

[Wiljan van den Akker](#)
Dean of Humanities & Vice-Rector for Research



The Centre in Spring and Beyond

The year 2013 has been a spectacular and very productive year for the Centre for the Humanities: we organised [three major conferences](#) (The Edward Said Memorial Conference (15-17 April 2013), The Colonial Legacy Conference (21-22 June 2013) and the Idea of University and the Future of Knowledge Conference (19-20 September 2013), visited by over 500 people in total.

We concluded [the Treaty of Utrecht Chair](#) visiting professorship programme and published a special box-set to commemorate the Treaty of Utrecht 300th anniversary. We also made a [short animated film](#) about the visiting chair and a longer documentary about the social relevance of the Humanities (dir. Shanti van Dam), which is expected to be broadcast this Autumn. All of this made it a year not only of commemoration but also of transformation for our Centre. However, 2013 also marked a closure of the first five-year cycle of CfH and now we are moving forward into a new phase of activities and plans.

CfH kicked-off the 2014 spring semester with a faculty debate on Science in Transition in February and several events within the postsecular programme in March (public lecture with Herman Philipse on 10 March and two events with Stathis Gourgouris on 19-20 March). We start the month of April with welcoming [Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill](#), this year's CfH Writer in Residence, who will be taking part in several City2Cities literary festival

activities and other scholarly events. Being an Irish poet, N. Ní Dhomhnaill uses language as a tool to liberate the marginalized in contemporary Irish society. She writes solely in Irish in a nation where Irish monoglots are non-existent, and in a subversive female narrative that challenges stereotypes of women in Ireland.

Straight after the Writer in Residence programme, CfH will start its Theory Lab Series with the visit of Professor John Protevi (Louisiana State University). A prominent Deleuzian and continental philosopher, J. Protevi will give a talk at ['Continental Naturalism'](#): The Symposium on the Sciences, the Humanities and the State of the Earth Today' on 15 April. Prof. Protevi's visit is also a part of the ongoing CfH activities that are dedicated to promoting cutting-edge research in Deleuze studies. Next to the ongoing [seminars](#) on Gilles Deleuze and Cultural Studies, co-organized with the Netherlands Research School for Literary Studies (OSL), CfH is also the main organiser of the forthcoming International Conference on Deleuze's Cultural

Encounters with the New Humanities, which is to take place in Hong Kong on 9–12 June this year.

The month of May in CfH will be dedicated to the new trends in Humanities. An Environmental Humanities Symposium is to take place on 27 May, involving both our Environmental Humanities fellow [Marcus Andreas](#) as well as the Artist in Residence [Janina Pigaht](#) to create an interdisciplinary exploration of environmental citizenship. On May 28 we will follow up with another [Theory Lab](#) and a [masterclass by Timothy O'Leary](#) (University of Hong Kong), co-organised with the Interdisciplinary Network for the Critical Humanities [Terra Critica](#). The lab will focus on critique as a desubjectivizing practice that both requires and allows us to get over ourselves, while the masterclass will be dedicated to exploring Foucault's writings on critique and the concept of experience in his work.

This year CfH will also become an institutional home to [Perpetual Peace Project](#) – a cultural initiative with the Syracuse Humanities Center and its director Prof. Gregg Lambert that the Centre has been part of since 2011. In 2014 we are contributing to re-instigating the discussions on the concept of peace through the project ['Kant for Kids'](#). The initiative, carried out by a team of interns at the Centre, aims at

re-drafting and translating Kant's famous treatise 'Perpetual Peace' into a book for children.

The academic year will end with an intensive summer school course with Rosi Braidotti: ['Critical Theory Beyond Negativity'](#). Co-taught with Iris van der Tuin (Utrecht University) and Maria Hlavajova (Basis voor actuele kunst – BAK), the course offers an introduction to contemporary critical debates on the function of 'the negative' in the construction of subjects and of their epistemic and ethical values, and will advocate for the productive potential of the

contemporary posthuman condition. Ending in this affirmative note, we hope that you will join us for a challenging and inspiring activities programme in Spring! For our most updated programme, please visit our [website](#) or [Facebook page](#) and [subscribe](#) to our newsletter to be informed about our and our partners' events.

Goda Klumbyte
CfH Activities and Communication
Coordinator



Knowledge, Future and Coloniality

In 2013 the Centre for the Humanities has hosted three major conferences dealing with, among other things, the question of knowledge.

The [Edward Said Memorial Conference](#), the [Colonial Legacy Conference](#), and the [Idea of University and the Future of Knowledge Conference](#) all dealt with the ways in which knowledge production and the legacies of Empire are intertwined. During the Idea of University conference the former [Treaty of Utrecht Chair](#) [Paul Gilroy](#) called for 'reparatory resynchronization', that is for putting back into sync the modes of knowledge that have been disrupted by the slave trade, chattel slavery, and colonialism. This is, of course, in line with the work of Edward Said, one of the most eminent critics of Western knowledge production to whom the Centre for the Humanities paid tribute in 2013. We are standing on the shoulders of these giants, but their work also points out the long road still ahead.



What does Empire mean for the knowledge produced at the academy today?

This question, which could be termed the coloniality of knowledge, has been part of my work as a fellow at the Centre for the Humanities. In particular, I have worked on ways to understand the intersections between secularism and empire in contemporary notions of citizenship and belonging. Namely, I have looked at the ways in which Dutch citizenship today is understood as a secular and racial composite.

The dimensions of race and secularism also impact on the production of knowledge. For example, some young black intellectuals, in particular in the Humanities, are deliberately turning their backs at the university. They refuse to become part of an institution they understand as inextricably linked to colonial modes of knowledge production and structural forms of racism. Nevertheless, they engage critically with both the institution and its scholarly traditions and bodies of work. They form intellectual communities or collectives outside of the academy. This is a worrisome development that raises important

questions about the idea of university, or, more specifically, the future and the past of knowledge.

So far we have focused our discussion either on academic cultures and their relations within the university, touching upon questions of the human or the posthuman, and the role of the Humanities in these discussions. Or the focus was on the role of the university in the public sphere and society at large. These young intellectuals' move away from the university raises another dimension, namely how the university

relates to other intellectual cultures outside of the institution itself. For example, an important part of the production of knowledge now takes place in the blogosphere, where information is produced, disseminated, and discussed.

I think whichever way one sees this – as a problem or as an opportunity, it is something the university needs to engage with. Achieving what Rosi Braidotti has called a 'pluriversity', that is an institution and the knowledge produced in it that is open to new modes of knowledge, and a

diversity of people producing it warrants knowledge about knowledge – its past and its future.

[Markus Balkenhol](#)
Postdoctoral Researcher at Meertens Institute and Utrecht University and a former Research Fellow at CfH

A volume born out of The Edward Said Memorial Conference, 'Conflicting Humanities', edited by Rosi Braidotti and Paul Gilroy, is forthcoming in 2015.



Speed and Slowness at the Corporate University

Day two of the conference [‘The Idea of University’](#), which was organised by the Centre for the Humanities on September 19-20, 2013 in Utrecht, featured the so-called [‘Young Academics Panel’](#).



Four younger academics—from an Amsterdam-based BA-student in the Arts to post-docs and assistant professors from Utrecht—shared their ideas of the university, especially in the light of recent moves made by the Dutch government and university higher administration toward more corporate models of running the institution.

My own presentation during the panel dealt primarily with Margarethe von Trotta’s period film [Hannah Arendt](#) (2012) about which I argued that it functions as a critical and creative manifesto for younger scholars today. The film is set between 1960 and 1964, covering Arendt’s engagement with the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and the writing of articles about the trial for the *New Yorker*, texts which would eventually go into the 1964 book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*.

One striking scene is when Arendt, played by Barbara Sukowa, is on the phone with an editor refusing his insistence on a timely delivery of her texts simply by asking a rhetorical question: ‘Or did you want to pressure me with a deadline?’ Arendt needed two years for the completion of a set of articles on Adolf Eichmann’s role in the Shoah. I argued that this attitude—taking time for thought—and the specific manner of thinking—lying on the couch or staring out of the window while smoking a cigarette, eyes closed, breathing, memorizing—is nowadays impossible

owing to the state of the university and the ‘pressure to perform’, in the words of Jon McKenzie.

The speed with which the latest managerial models, shaped according to advanced capitalism, and the newest measuring tools for student and staff performance are implemented is unprecedented. Experiencing this relatively new situation at a university in North-Western Europe, my colleagues and I often wonder: ‘when did this happen?’ Courses know ‘break-even points’ these days, which means that profitability is not only measured in terms of intellectual growth on the part of students (and staff), but also—and principally so—according to financial gain. Quick-scanning the situation in terms of the *effects* of the speedy transition to a corporate academic model in neoliberal times, we are looking at the rise of undergraduate conferences which encourage BA-students to present papers, and of peer-reviewed journals for the same student cohort. We look at graduate-student edited collections (not just journals), and at the soliciting of such collections by academic presses such as Cambridge Scholars.

Apart from a vastly growing market of scholarly journals for seniors, the impression takes root that it is necessary for PhD-students and post-docs to keep track of the blogosphere too because that’s where concepts seem to be coined nowadays, as if the printed media offer just

commentaries. Finally, note the necessity of applying for research monies from the doctorate level upward, because contracts often come without research time and/or about-to-be-tenured staff is evaluated also on the basis of application success. No wonder Rosalind Gill (2010: 229) lists ‘exhaustion, stress, overload, insomnia, anxiety, shame, aggression, hurt, guilt and feelings of out-of-placeness, fraudulence and fear of exposure’ as symptoms found amongst staff working ‘within the contemporary academy’.

Hannah Arendt provides a model of slow thinking and discussing the film with my peers, we all decided using Von Trotta’s most recent filmic production in advanced graduate courses. Why? Because the film makes alternatives to the feverish university felt. The film empowers young academics who wish to pursue these alternatives because they are driven by intellectual curiosity, the desire to produce creative thought and a deep-felt necessity that their work matters.

[Iris van der Tuin](#)
Assistant Professor of Gender Studies
and Philosophy of Science, Utrecht
University

A special issue of Humanities journal on the ‘Idea of the University’, edited by R. Braidotti and S. van Dam, is expected to be published in 2014.

Images of Peace

Kant's 1795 essay *Perpetual Peace* prefaces with the reference to an Image. He mentions a Dutch inn that carries a sign with the name 'perpetual peace'. Below it, the image of a graveyard.

*Whether this satirical inscription on a Dutch innkeeper's sign upon which a burial ground was painted had for its object mankind in general, or the rulers of states in particular, who are insatiable of war, or merely the philosophers who dream this sweet dream, it is not for us to decide.*¹

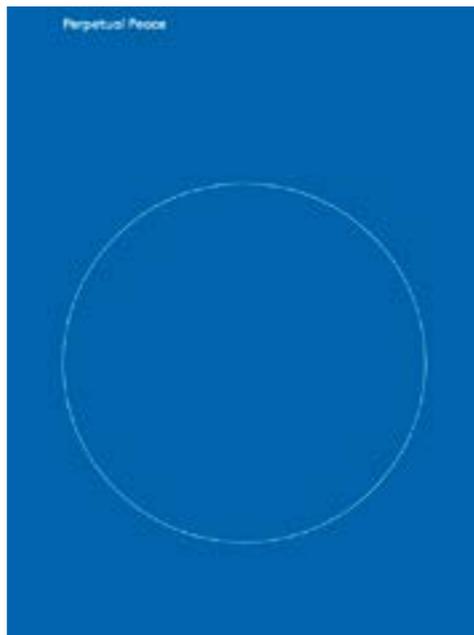
It may indeed, as Kant writes, be impudent of us to decide what this image of the graveyard on the innkeeper's sign alludes to. Instead of hazarding a guess on the metaphorical meaning of such an image, as a filmmaker I need to ask a more underlying question that comes to my mind: What do we see when we visualize peace?

When suggesting images of peace, most would think of still images, or photographs of spiritual, rather than civil peace. The oldest and most common being the dove, the olive branch or the forked peace sign. Most however are symbolic representations of peace that escapes life, is inactive, or empty. These include images such as still waters, meditation, wide, empty landscapes and sleeping people.

The older religious symbols for peace such as the dove and olive branch

however, are often used in protests and acts of citizenship. In first civil protests in Syria for instance, protesters walked the streets with olive branches as a sign of peaceful intent and demand for change. In Norway, after the shooting on Utoya, crowds took the street with white and red roses. As a filmmaker I ask myself how I can move beyond a visual vernacular of apathy and towards an active creation of peace. The examples above, to me, are a step into a necessary direction.

Let us take as an example the [Perpetual Peace Project](#) as it has been conceived: an academic and artistic



movement that stimulates dialogues on peace on camera and off and finds collaborations in initiatives and artworks that in fact are creating preconditions for peace in music, food, or film.²

When as Artist in Residence I was asked to create films to [accompany the project](#) I decided to explore the links between Academia, Art and Activism. Talking about peace is one thing, but how does one 'do' peace? So I asked the players in the films what it means to be a peaceful academic. I asked that question of course because I was very much concerned with my responsibility as a filmmaker: what does it mean to be a peaceful artist?

The answer to this question I derive from the six films: namely that peace should not be passive. One might want to consider that an image is not an image of peace unless its intent is

peaceful. This means an intent for active involvement – a dove won't help create a positive condition for change unless it comes forth of a purpose to disturb our normative thinking. I believe that this is a responsibility for academia and artists alike. A graveyard therefore may allude to the idea that there can be peace only in death. But it can also be considered a peaceful image that strikes up food for thought and shifts our visual thinking. Inspired by this first step of the Perpetual Peace Project, my next project as Artist in Residence will focus on the civic denial to deal with environmental change. Citizens are generally aware of changes and dangers to the environment, that the planet is falling off-balance, yet appearances and routines in our day-to-day lives remain largely unscathed. Together with the Centre for the Humanities, I will

develop an interactive format that responds to this issue.

[Janina Pigaht](#)
CfH Artist in Residence

1. Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795)
2. For different initiatives of the Perpetual Peace Project please visit the following sites:

www.perpetualpeaceproject.org

www.perpetualpeaceutrecht.wordpress.com

<http://www.syracusehumanities.org/center/initiatives/perpetual-peace/#.UZH8kJXZXzI>



Postsecular Citizenship



There is an urgent need to rethink the interaction between religion and citizenship in our times.

The rise of a variety of nationalist movements in Western European countries, the perceived 'crisis' of multiculturalism and ongoing controversies concerning religion in secular societies point to a need to reconfigure traditional frameworks in which religion and society are made sense of. What are the rites of passage of 21st century citizenship? How can a society be truly pluriform? What are the spiritual roots of secular values?

How can the developments in theories of secularism and religious identification contribute to contemporary quagmires?

It is with these ideas in mind that the Centre for the Humanities has embarked on its research programme that explores 'the postsecular'. Since 2010, the Center has organized a variation of nationally and internationally oriented events, and

hosted a variety of scholars and public figures whose work is central to contemporary debates. To illustrate the breadth of the programme with two events of 2013: CfH has hosted [Bart Jan Spruyt](#), a prominent conservative thinker whose work was instrumental in the development of the ideology of Geert Wilders' PVV, a populist anti-EU party that combines an extremely critical stance on Islam with a revindication of the 'Judeo-Christian' roots of Western civilization. The Centre has also hosted [Simon Critchley](#) of the New School in New York; Critchley's work

argues for seeing religion as an inspiration for progressive and even anarchist politics in the 21st century. These two extremes are illustrative of the variety of voices CfH has accommodated.

In the future the Center for the Humanities will continue to offer cutting edge research and public events. To name two examples: Columbia University's [Stathis Gourgouris](#) will be our guest in March 2014. Gourgouris, a student of Edward Said, argues for a form of secular criticism to counter both religious and secular extremism, which might be one of the most central questions for our times. CfH will also host debates with contemporary atheists such as [Herman Philipse](#) and prominent scholars of religion in the near future. Presently the Centre is part of the internationally oriented Mellon Project '[Secularism, Religion, Political Belonging](#)', which aims to place developments in an international perspective. In the summer of 2014 the international dimension of this topic will be investigated in collaboration with the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Having been a postdoctoral research fellow since January 2013, I will continue my affiliation with the Centre. Besides co-organizing the postsecular programme, my research has focused on secularism and the rise

of nationalism, and I will represent CfH in Hong Kong by presenting my current research which focusses on secularism and the EU.

Whereas it used to be a deeply engrained idea that religion would disappear, the 21st century saw a large number of religiously oriented conflicts. This points to an urgency to rethink both the foundations of 'the secular' as well as the role of religion in our times. The 'postsecular' functions as a much-needed third term, a term that moves beyond the opposition between religious – and secular citizenship to explore the complex forms of belonging in a globalized world.

[Ernst van den Hemel](#)
CfH Research Fellow



Green Citizenship and the University

Utrecht is a fantastic place to explore notions of citizenship. When the city recently celebrated the 300 years anniversary of its historic [peace treaty](#) it not only commemorated the goodwill of the political parties involved, but also the power of citizens.

Take the [Centers' activities within the Perpetual Peace Project](#), which inspired us to see peace as a matter of everyday life; not an eternally fixed (and somehow boring) state, but a 'perpetual' call for creativity and compassion. In a similar vein, sustainability is also often irritatingly imagined as a state of gracious ease, a quasi-natural state of being. The trouble is that sustainability doesn't come naturally. As peace, it requires cultural effort.

My Sustainable Humanities Fellowship at the Centre for the Humanities runs within the sustainability theme of the University and the Center's Environmental Humanities research. This emerging young discipline brings together the best of Humanities expertise (e.g. from history and philosophy) to reframe and understand the human experience given the ecologic considerations of today. Within this timely and interdisciplinary field I focus on notions of green citizenship¹ that help to perceive citizens as crucial agents within a natureculture-continuum, which is in dire need of change.

Following the sociologist and ethnographer Dave Horton in his contribution to the seminal volume *Environmental Citizenship*, I studied some of the 'green architecture' which derives from and allows the emergence of green citizenship. Specifically, I researched so-called 'ecovillages', where citizens'



collective CO2-footprint seem to mock their national averages (e.g. about a third in the German ecovillage of [Sieben Linden](#)). One of my main findings addresses the importance of social sustainability in achieving these shared ecological goals: to constructively deal with diversity and thereby allow for the emergence of trust, which is crucial for a collective movement towards sustainability.

However, we should not misinterpret these specific sites as societal blueprints. In *Green Citizenship. A Review and Critique* (2008), Teena



Gabrielson, Professor of History of Political Thought and Citizenship Studies, repeats the need for inclusive and emancipatory perspectives on cities, but also to remain aware of the social constructedness of 'nature' and 'culture'. It is tempting to do sustainability politics by preferring some conceptions of nature over others, e.g. the pastoral ideal of many ecovillages. However, history – and especially the case of the Netherlands – teaches us that those are not necessarily more 'natural' than others. The natureculture-continuum is also alive and kicking in cities and the societal search for sustainability, which is based on such conceptions, has to be open-ended.

In acknowledging the agency of citizens I do not intend to relegate all responsibility for change to them. Green citizenship demands a re-alignment of all societal actors. Instead of promoting the specific sites of ecovillages as blueprints, I forward the idea that we need a diversity of

green architecture, especially expanding to universities. The Humanities for example are treasure troves of knowledge and expertise, but also ideally devoted to a critical and thorough understanding of the breadth and depth of human experience. What is needed hereby is a thriving inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration among disciplines – a cultural effort within the university. From there on, universities may open up and become approachable and accessible for citizens, ideally at eye level. Eventually, universities might become crucial sites for the emergence and cultivation of green citizenship – something to celebrate in the future.

[Marcus Andreas](#)
Visiting Scholar at Rachel Carson
Center, Ludwig-Maximilians
University Munich

¹ Used here as a general umbrella term for environmental, ecological and sustainability citizenship

Connecting the Dots: The International Dimension of CfH

The work of the Centre for the Humanities cultivates an international dimension that aims to profile the faculty and the University through targeted European and international activities, connecting to the academic and scientific world at large. Over the past year we have been consolidating and expanding existing international collaborations, as well as building new alliances and developing new joint projects.

Existing networks

CfH is a founding member and the elected secretariat of ECHIC – the [European Consortium of Humanities Institutes and Centres](#), that aims to serve their membership by addressing issues that are central to the task of defining the position of the Humanities in general and the position of Humanities Centres and Institutes in particular. This year's ECHIC Annual Conference, which took place on 3-5 March in Oporto, also assessed the Humanities in relation to the grand challenges and [Horizon 2020](#), the new European funding framework that will channel 28 billion euros into research in the next seven years.

ECHIC is an independent organization affiliated with the [International Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes \(CHCI\)](#), of which the CfH is also an active member. Within this international consortium the Centre is one of the five participants in the [Religion, Secularism and Political Belonging \(RelSec\)](#) project. The RelSec project links five humanities centres

—at Utrecht University, the University of Arizona, Portland State University, Tel Aviv University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong—through a mutually coordinated set of research programmes. The project's key research questions are: How are we to understand the contemporary resurgence of religious discourses, social practices, and forms of cultural organization in political arenas, civil society, and the public sphere? What light do these developments cast on long-standing accounts of 'modernity' as a secularizing historical process? How are current formation of religious and secular shaping local, national, transnational and 'universal' measures of political belonging? Over the three years of the project (2013–2015), each participating centre conducts investigations with an interdisciplinary research team, anchored to each site along these thematic lines. The next workshops will take place in June 2014 in Hong Kong, followed by a Winter workshop at the beginning of 2015, hosted by CfH in Utrecht.

New Alliances

The Global Humanities

This is a bilateral project with the [Research Institute for the Humanities](#) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. It was set up as a pilot project in 2011, was developed through joint participation in the RelSec project, and is currently focusing on two activities. Firstly, the Environmental Humanities and secondly comparative perspectives on the construction of the Human and of Humanity within the Humanities.

European Environmental Humanities Alliance

[The European Environmental Humanities Alliance \(EEHA\)](#), of which the Centre for the Humanities is a founding member, has set up in October 2013 a task force which has the aim to work on reporting about the state of the Environmental Humanities in Europe, contribute to their agenda, and in general further



their role in European policy-making. Drawing attention to and organizing Environmental Humanities research and scholars in Europe and beyond and their contribution to issues of global environmental change, the task force is currently developing a survey in order to map what kind of research is going on in the field of the Environmental Humanities in Europe (state of the art), creating a project for doing coordinated visioning of what are the key research issues the Environmental Humanities need to ask in relation to Global Environmental Change. The Alliance has drafted a [joint declaration](#) to coincide with the Lithuanian EU Presidency Conference in September 2013 on 'Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities'.

Moreover CfH is coordinating a European networking application on this topic, aiming to advance inter-institutional and international research collaborations in the rapidly developing field of Environmental Humanities research, together with among others the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich, Trinity College at the University of Dublin and the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies.

The Global Academy of Liberal Arts CfH is also a founding member of [The Global Academy of Liberal Arts \(GALA\)](#), a global network of creativity spanning national and cultural boundaries. It brings together a leading group of Liberal Arts providers from around the world to broaden the experience of students and staff. GALA will explore the

relationship between creativity and social engagement from an international, interdisciplinary and inter-generational perspective. The founding conference of GALA will take place on 4-6 June at Bath Spa University.

Posthumanism, the Affective Turn and Socially Just Critical Higher Education Pedagogies

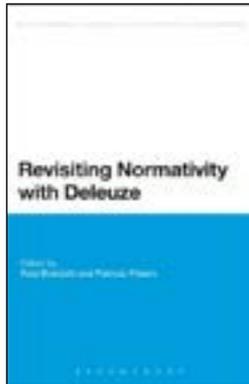
The Centre is participating in a new [project](#), coordinated by the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, which seeks to bring together academic experts in critical, poststructural and sociomaterial studies from both humanities and social sciences, as well as those involved in other scientific disciplines to investigate how a new theoretical framework – one that is grounded in the ideas incorporated in critical posthumanism and the affective turn – could contribute towards renewing critical pedagogical practices in higher education.

Furthermore the Centre is participating in the [bEUCitizen Consortium](#), an FP7 project with 25 international partners led by Utrecht University, investigating European citizenship and how European citizens can more effectively understand and make use of their rights. Boosting the outstanding quality of research in the Humanities at Utrecht University and increasing their visibility through these international activities is what CfH is dedicated to and will continue aiming at in the future.

Tobijn de Graauw
CfH General Manager

Publications

Revisiting Normativity with Deleuze Rosi Braidotti and Patricia Pisters, eds. London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2012



This volume came out after the conference **National symposium on Deleuze scholarship: 'Lines of Flight in the Lowlands'** that was organised by the

CfH in 2012. The volume assembles some of the most distinguished scholars in the field of Deleuze studies in order to provide both an accessible introduction to key concepts in Deleuze's thought and to test them in view of the issue of normativity. This includes not only the law, but also the question of norms and values in the broader ethical, political and methodological sense. The volume covers socio-political and legal theory; the epistemological critique of scientific discourse and the cultural, artistic and aesthetic interventions emerging from Deleuze's philosophy.

Wandelgids sporen van slavernij in Utrecht / Traces of Slavery in Utrecht: A Walking Guide Esther Captain and Hans Visser, Centre for the Humanities, 2013

It may not be obvious, but in the city of Utrecht many traces of slavery and the colonial past can be found. As part of



the *Vrede van Utrecht* commemoration project, Centre for the Humanities presented the bilingual walking guide *Traces of Slavery in Utrecht*

('Wandelgids sporen van slavernij in Utrecht'), in which historian Esther Captain guides the walker along houses in the Utrecht city centre that were once the homes of VOC servants, plantation owners, former slaves and freed men and women from the East as well as the West, and advocates of the abolition of slavery. The walking guide is also available for download as a smartphone application. For more information see:

www.sporenavslavernijutrecht.nl

After Cosmopolitanism Rosi Braidotti, Patrick Hanafin and Bolette Blaagaard, eds. New York: Routledge, 2013



At a time when social and political reality seems to move away from the practice of cosmopolitanism, whilst being in serious need of a new

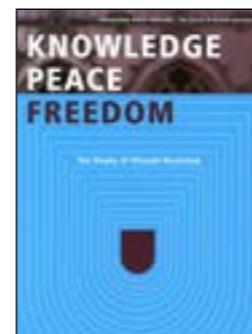
international framework to regulate global interaction, what are the new definitions and practices of cosmopolitanism? Including

contributions from leading figures across the humanities and social sciences, *After Cosmopolitanism* takes up this question as its central challenge. Its core argument is the idea that our globalised condition forms the heart of contemporary cosmopolitan claims, which do not refer to a transcendental ideal, but are rather immanent to the material conditions of global interdependence. The present volume argues that a radical transformation of cosmopolitanism is already ongoing and that more effort is needed to take stock of transformations which are both necessary and possible.

This volume was published as a result of **The Idea of Cosmopolitanism: Interdisciplinary Dialogues** conference, part of the Leverhulme funded three-year project, "Between Cosmopolitanism and Empire: Europe, Human Rights, Sovereignty" (co-ordinated by BBK College, London) and NWO-International funded two-year project, "Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Media" (co-ordinated by Polis, LSE and Centre for the Humanities, Utrecht University).

Knowledge, Peace, Freedom – The Treaty of Utrecht Revisited

A collection of essays published by the Centre for the Humanities, 2013



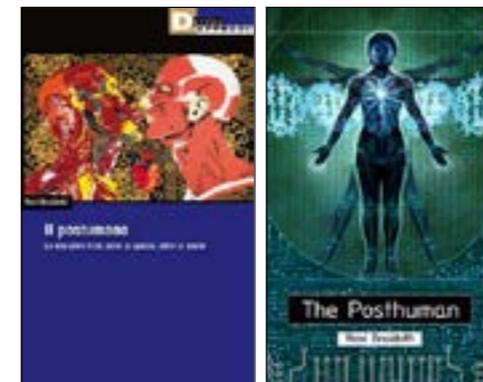
The volume that was published to commemorate the Treaty of Utrecht 300-year anniversary, is structured in two parts. The first part contains the lectures of the

Treaty of Utrecht Visiting Professors – a programme that the CfH ran in the years 2009-2012. The second part 'From the Treaty of Utrecht to Cosmopolitan Citizenship' presents key texts by some of the recurrent CfH visitors who helped us think through and sustain the commemorative programme of the Treaty. The volume was included as part of a set with the same title, containing also 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht: A Walking Guide' and a CD 'Music for the Peace of Utrecht. Orchestra and Choir of the Netherlands Bach Society'.

The Posthuman Rosi Braidotti Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013

Il Postumano: La vita oltre il sé, oltre la specie, oltre la morte

Rosi Braidotti, translated by Angela Balzano, Roma: Derive Approdi, 2014



The Posthuman offers both an introduction and major contribution to contemporary debates on the posthuman. Digital 'second life', genetically modified food, advanced prosthetics, robotics and reproductive technologies are familiar facets of our globally linked and technologically mediated societies. This has blurred the traditional distinction between the human and its others, exposing the non-naturalistic structure of the

human. *The Posthuman* starts by exploring the extent to which a post-humanist move displaces the traditional humanistic unity of the subject. Rather than perceiving this situation as a loss of cognitive and moral self-mastery, Braidotti argues that the posthuman helps us make sense of our flexible and multiple identities. The book has already been translated into Italian (*Il postumano*, Derive Approdi, 2014) and the translations into German, Chinese and French are on the way.

Forthcoming Publications

This Deleuzian Century, ed. Rosi Braidotti and Rick Dolphijn. Forthcoming in 2014.

Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular Publics, ed. Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw and Eva Midden. Palgrave Macmillan. Forthcoming in 2014.

Special issue of Humanities journal 'Idea of Univeristy', ed. Rosi Braidotti and Shanti van Dam, containing essays from the 'Idea of University and the Future of Knowledge' Conference held in Utrecht in 2013. Forthcoming in 2014.

Conflicting Humanities, ed. Rosi Braidotti and Paul Gilroy, a volume born out of Edward Said Memorial Conference that was held in Utrecht in 2013. Forthcoming in 2015.

CfH Activities in Spring 2014

• CfH Writer in Residence 2014 Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill	April 6-12	Utrecht	See programme
• Continental Naturalism: Symposium on the Sciences, the Humanities and the State of the Earth Today	April 15	Utrecht	See programme
• Annual National Deleuze Scholarship Conference #3	May 16	Rotterdam	More information
• Environmental Citizenship Symposium	May 27	Utrecht	More information available soon on CfH website
• Master class and Theory Lab with Timothy O'Leary (co-organised with Terra Critica network)	May 28	Utrecht	More information on the masterclass More information on the Theory Lab
• CHCI Annual Meeting and Conference 'Performative Humanities'	June 5-8	Hong Kong	More information
• Conference on Deleuze's Cultural Encounters With the New Humanities	June 9-12	Hong Kong	More information
• Utrecht Summer School course with Rosi Braidotti: 'Critical Theory Beyond Negativity'	August 18-22	Utrecht	More information and registration

Would you like to keep up to date with CfH events and activities? [Sign up for our monthly newsletter.](#)

Colophon

Editors Rosi Braidotti and Goda Klumbyte design www.taluut.nl photo's Sieben Linden, Wieke Eefting, DUB Magazine, A2o, Creative Commons lincese, Wikimedia Commons, university picture archives



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