

## Cultural Transformations in the Age of Globalization

### 1. Introduction and primary goals

Cultural Transformations in the Age of Globalization (KULTRANS) is a cross-faculty research programme dedicated to groundbreaking research on cultural transformation processes in different social and institutional areas, both locally and globally. KULTRANS aims to be innovative also in regard to new forms of dissemination and collaboration with relevant actors and groups outside the university.

KULTRANS was founded as a collaboration between the Faculties of Humanities (HF), Social Sciences (SV), Law (JUS), and Educational Sciences (UV) with participation also from other faculties, institutions, and centres at the University of Oslo (UiO). Activity within KULTRANS will have the following three primary goals:

- 1) To develop and carry out cross-disciplinary and cross-faculty research projects based at UiO that are of high international standard and include both national and international participants.
- 2) To establish arenas for discussion and exchange, such as conferences, seminars, and a web site, across the traditional borders between disciplines and faculties; these arenas will serve as platforms for collaboration and knowledge transfer for new research projects, initiatives, and collaborations.
- 3) To develop and carry out plans for publishing and disseminating ongoing and completed research to the national and international community of scholars, to the Norwegian public, and in a concerted collaboration with partners from different parts of society.

The work on creating a disciplinary and organizational platform has taken place since spring 2008, resulting in the identification of both the topics and the key personnel of KULTRANS. The disciplinary, organizational, and economic frameworks have been established in the respective forms of an overarching idea, an organizational chart, and a budget. See also the home page [www.cultrans.uio.no](http://www.cultrans.uio.no) (under construction).

### 2. Overarching idea

Whereas much previous research has viewed culture as a static system for the production of identity and differentiation, a shift has gradually taken place, with culture increasingly being regarded as a venue for change, that is, for multiple and complex transformative processes that occur within different domains, at different places, and often at different speeds. A distinctive feature of such transformations is that they transcend disciplinary, national, and epochal boundaries of what is known and held in common. To meet this challenge, KULTRANS aims to conduct research that is transdisciplinary, transnational, and transhistorical.

**TRANSformations.** Change occurs when people, texts, things, or concepts cross boundaries. New encounters and exchanges are played out, and new connections

and constellations take shape: languages change; texts are read and used in new ways; laws are formulated and challenged; institutional formations, practices, and identities shift; familiar objects take on new forms. The dynamics of change in itself demands an appropriate research dynamics that is flexible and multiperspective, one that focuses on the dynamic interaction between identity and difference, continuity and rupture, tradition and innovation. While change, like history, progress, or evolution, seems to presuppose a unitary movement, transformations rather signify multiple, varied, and often intersecting processes that must be studied by themselves and in their own right. Subsequently, it becomes necessary to investigate the ways in which different transformations – whether social, political, linguistic, scientific, or cultural – interact with one another. KULTRANS will identify and analyse such processes in regard to their internal dynamics, mutual relations, and effects.

**TRANSdisciplinary.** KULTRANS conducts research that crosses the borders between disciplines, specializations and faculties. That this research is transdisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary entails that the active, conscious, and constant crossing of disciplinary borders has in itself become a key theme. What are the theoretical, methodological, and empirical questions that emerge once the established borders between specializations and disciplines are transcended?

**TRANSnational.** KULTRANS will investigate what happens when the world becomes a venue for communication and interaction in competition and exchange with other political, social, and geographical entities. Rather than focusing on national contexts and traditions, KULTRANS will conduct research that has an explicitly comparative and transnational aim. The principal focus will be directed towards cultural transformations that challenge national identities, traditions, and legal or moral systems.

**TRANShistorical.** A decisive contribution from KULTRANS as a transdisciplinary field of research will be to afford research on globalization and cultural transformation a clear historical and diachronic dimension. By “globalization” we thus do not mean a development in communications technology or economic relations in recent decades, but rather an indefinite number of shifting activities and processes that have taken place over several centuries, with various geographical and institutional points of departure, but with the world as the horizon, arena, or goal.

### 3. Organization

KULTRANS is hosted by the Faculty of Humanities and will be coordinated by the Department of Literature, Area Studies, and European Languages (ILOS). The project's research will be organized as follows:

<b>KULTRANS</b> <b>Steering Committee: the vice-deans of research at JUS, HF, and UV, and the former vice-dean of research at SV</b> <b>[Advisory Board]</b> <b>Academic Director: Helge Jordheim</b> <b>Management Committee: the leaders of research areas 1-5</b>				
<b>Research Area 1</b> Migration, Identity, and Language  <b>Leader:</b> Ingjerd Hoem (SV)	<b>Research Area 2</b> Foundational Texts  <b>Leader:</b> Karen Gammelgaard (HF)	<b>Research Area 3</b> Nature and the Natural  <b>Leader:</b> Kristin Asdal (SV)	<b>Research Area 4</b> Cultural Production, Aesthetics, and Materiality  <b>Leader:</b> Anne Eriksen (HF)	<b>Research Area 5</b> Transnational Processes, Legitimacy, and Values  <b>Leaders:</b> Katja Franko Aas, Cecilia Bailliet (JUS)
<b>Overarching project</b> Transnational and Transdisciplinary Concepts <b>Leader: Helge Jordheim</b>				

Fig 1. Organization of the research in KULTRANS (see the appendix for details on the individual research areas)

A steering committee will have the ultimate academic and economic responsibility and will comprise representatives from the leadership of the faculties that are funding the research. These faculties are at the outset the Faculties of Humanities (HF), Social Sciences (SV), Law (JUS), and Educational Sciences (UV), which are all represented by their vice-deans of research or someone else appointed by the vice-dean; in addition, the steering committee itself will appoint an external representative. The steering committee will hire an academic director who will run KULTRANS with the aid of an administrative coordinator; the latter will also be charged with creating and running a web page for the entire project. The academic director will collaborate closely with a cross-disciplinary and cross-faculty management committee, comprising the leaders of the research areas; to free up their time, KULTRANS will cover 20% of their regular UiO salaries. These leaders will participate actively in planning and carrying out the research-related activities and in strategic decisions concerning the research. In addition, an advisory board will be appointed in 2009, consisting of leading international scholars with key positions in relevant networks.

#### 4. Research areas and activities

KULTRANS shall have at most five research areas (see figure 1 above for the individual titles). Moreover, an overarching theme will serve as both a shared academic frame of reference and a nexus for the participants. Each research area includes participants from at least two of the four faculties that are sponsoring KULTRANS. The research themes have been chosen with an eye towards currency, relevance, and not least interest among the participants, but also because of the theme's potential to generate cross-disciplinary research and dissemination projects. The management committee has likewise been constituted with scholars from highly dissimilar academic backgrounds, research fields, and networks, in order to sustain the cross-disciplinary and cross-faculty perspectives.

The research areas are not autonomous, self-sufficient units, but must rather be understood as a series of prisms with which to examine the same research questions, questions that are linked to the global and globalization as a historically and culturally specific experience and process. It is primarily the management committee's responsibility to ensure continuity and communication between research areas.

KULTRANS is predicated on the idea that cross-disciplinary collaboration is the result of joint activities rather than theoretical postulates; hence, all the themes are centred around such activities. The activities in KULTRANS may vary in nature (research projects, conferences, workshops, public dissemination, network building, book projects), but must always include a plan both for international publication and for dissemination aimed at a Norwegian public. The activities will also in various ways serve to unify the research areas, by means of joint planning and transaction or through participation in one another's activities. In the following, the activities that are planned for the next two years will be briefly presented, centred around the overarching theme and the research areas, respectively. The activities fall roughly into four categories: internal activities (internal meetings, planning sessions, and workshops); open activities (seminars, conferences, and guest lectures); publication of research findings; and dissemination.

The purpose of the **overarching theme**, which sorts under the academic director, is both to create a venue for discussion between the research areas and to serve as the focal point for the entire KULTRANS programme. The starting point will be a number of transdisciplinary and transnational concepts, understood as concepts that cross the boundaries between languages and nations and between the various disciplines, and that none of the relevant disciplinary traditions could make do without; salient examples include "culture", "transformation / change", and "the world". We will start off with "the world", which is to be the key theme for research projects and seminars in the next few years. Examining the concepts we use and our ways of presenting the world entails historicizing the concepts of "globalization", "the transnational", and so forth, in line with the goals laid forth in the programme statement. So far these perspectives have engendered an application to the Research Council of Norway and a HERA application (see section 8 below). The kick-off conference for KULTRANS on March 27 featured "the world" as one of its primary themes, and inaugurated a seminar series, entitled The World Seminar, that

will continue for a further eighteen months; the series will include both workshops (where the KULTRANS participants will present relevant ideas, projects, and works in progress) and guest lectures with experts from various fields. The series will culminate in a major international conference in spring/autumn 2011, featuring both KULTRANS scholars and a number of international scholars, that will examine various concepts and representations of the world, such as “the international community”, “global trade”, “world literature”, and “global justice”. Papers from both the conference and the seminar series will be collected in one or more books and published internationally.

### **Research Area 1: Migration, Identity, and Language plans**

- a material-based seminar series that will run throughout the entire period, convening roughly three times per semester. The seminars give the participants the opportunity to present a work in progress, whether in the form of a text, audio file, object, or images/film. The scholar in question will first briefly account for his or her planned treatment of and analytical approach to the material, before the group discusses alternative methods and interpretations.
- several publications that will stem from this seminar series.
- a separate project concerning the visual dissemination of materials and approaches developed during the seminar.
- to help organize and carry out the 8th International Symposium on Bilingualism, which will take place in Oslo in 2011 as part of the University of Oslo’s bicentennial.

### **Research Area 2: Foundational Texts plans**

- to organize several workshops with an aim to defining, classifying, selecting, and analysing a set of foundational texts.
- to invite at least four foreign scholars as guest lecturers and develop a collaboration with them.
- to write at least one joint, co-edited, theory-centred monograph that will be published internationally.
- to write at least two anthologies about selected foundational texts that will be analysed in a transdisciplinary fashion (also to be published internationally).
- to create a common database with a selection of annotated foundational texts. The database shall be available both for the broad Norwegian public and for international and national research communities, and help develop secondary projects in tandem with international collaborators on a specific set of foundational texts (e.g., constitutions, encyclopaedias, or curricula)
- to create a web site to be used for dissemination and as a virtual space for the project’s collaborators.

### **Research Area 3: Nature and the Natural plans**

- an ongoing reading seminar for and by the project participants
- spring 2009 and spring 2010: lecture series with national and international lecturers

- ongoing information seminars and workshops of limited duration, as well as a one-day seminar Aug./Sept. 2009
- Nov. 2009: to co-organize the conference Medical Knowledge and Medical Practice in the 20th century (with the Nordic Network on Medical History).
- Dec. 2009: the international workshop Controversies in Science/Practices in Politics.
- Sept. 2010: international conference, followed by the intended publication *Sentient Creatures/Securing Life*.
- to establish a concrete collaboration with the other research areas, for example concerning the topic of materiality. We have applied for research grants to fund such a project, the scope of which will depend on the funding. The doctoral courses that KULTRANS and TIK (the Centre for Technology, Innovation, and Culture) have sought funding for will also invigorate cross-area collaboration and collaboration within KULTRANS as a whole; one of these courses will focus on nature.

#### **Research Area 4: Cultural Production, Aesthetics and Materiality plans**

- to hold three internal workshops (in June, September, and October 2009) on the theme of materiality and aesthetics.
- to organize an open guest lecture/seminar in November 2009.
- to launch a series of Nordic workshops on the transformations of materiality, in collaboration with research area 3. The series will extend into 2011; it will apply for external funds, but will not depend on such funds. The workshops intend to highlight Nordic research on materiality in a European context, with a related exhibition also being a possibility.
- to help organize and carry out the annual conference of the International Society for Cultural History in August 2011.

#### **Research Area 5: Transnational Processes, Legitimacy, and Values plans**

- to hold an international conference entitled Cosmopolitan Justice and Its Discontents autumn 2009, with a subsequent publication based on the conference papers.
- to organize a seminar series with national and international moderators, to commence spring 2009, with a focus on transnational values and legitimacy.

### **6. Publication and dissemination**

As indicated in the activity overview, KULTRANS plans to publish and disseminate extensively. During 2009 we will draw up separate plans for publication and dissemination, making it easier for us to see how best to propagate the research findings that will materialize during 2009–11.

**Publication plan.** Findings from the research projects that either originate from or are part of KULTRANS will be published both nationally and internationally in both Norwegian and other languages (primarily English). In the publication plan we will initially focus on English-language publications. Although we will encourage scholars to publish their works in relevant, peer-reviewed journals on their own accord, we will

also review the optimal alternatives for larger joint publications from KULTRANS: conference anthologies, special editions of key journals, joint book projects, and the like. We plan to find out which publishers and book series that might be relevant for KULTRANS publications, and potentially enter into a suitable collaboration. This does not mean, however, that we will not also encourage Norwegian-language publication, and the second volume in the Helge Jordheim-edited series *Begreper i historien* (Concepts in history), which will examine the concept “the world”, is in fact already slated for release in autumn 2009.

**Dissemination plan.** Academic dissemination is one of the core tasks of KULTRANS. With so broad an academic scope, however, it is by no means given beforehand how best to disseminate the results in a manner that is both targeted and innovative. During 2009 we will therefore also work on a dissemination plan in parallel with the publication plan, so as to systematically review the optimal dissemination types, channels, and methods. A primary ambition will be to identify the various circuits of information that KULTRANS can and should be part of, so that we can thereby avoid the undifferentiated references to “the public” that underlie so much dissemination. In the dissemination plan we will examine who either needs or would be interested in the type of research that KULTRANS conducts and how these actors would make best use of such research. Naturally, which institutions, firms, ministries, and so forth that might be relevant partners will vary according to the specific research topic. It is precisely this cross-disciplinary diversity that is the greatest strength of KULTRANS, but it also impels us to consider dissemination in more differentiated terms than is normal at the university level.

That said, we have already started to disseminate some of our ideas and tentative findings to the public. An important forum will be the seminar series *The World Seminar*, which commences May 14 and which is aimed partly at scholars (including KULTRANS participants) and partly at a wider audience. For the second seminar in the series, which will take place June 11 with “world heritage” as its topic, we are trying to include representatives from either the Directorate for Cultural Heritage or the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU), exemplifying the more differentiated dialogues that we are trying to establish. Other more general dissemination events that are planned for autumn 2009 include an open lecture/debate meeting on the twentieth anniversary of the historic year 1989, as well as participation at the Oslo Science Fair. In conjunction with the major joint conference on “the world” in spring/autumn 2011, we are attempting to organize an exhibition of maps, globes, and other representations of the world in a central location, such as the Nobel Peace Center or the National Library. We are also currently setting up a collaboration with the University of Oslo’s 2011 bicentennial committee.

## 7. PhD candidates and doctoral programmes

KULTRANS deems the recruitment and training of PhD candidates to be one of its principal tasks. As a sort of hub or engine in the programme’s cross-disciplinary collaboration, we will recruit a group of eight PhD candidates in 2009/10 who will thereby form a class. The idea behind this mode of recruitment is partly to prevent the PhD candidates from feeling that they are on their own, partly to allow us to

compose the group with what we consider to be the appropriate balance in regard to research topic, academic background, gender, and nationality. With this group in mind, KULTRANS will then create its doctoral courses, which will of course be open to other PhD candidates.

A key activity within KULTRANS will thereby be to plan and organize cross-disciplinary doctoral courses focused on our primary research topics, in a manner that will contribute to the general communication and integration in KULTRANS as a whole. In line with our focus on transnational and transdisciplinary concepts, our first doctoral course in January 2010 will pertain to conceptual history. Furthermore, KULTRANS has begun collaborating with the Centre for Technology, Innovation, and Culture (TIK) on a series of PhD courses related to fundamental questions and themes in historical theory (see section 8). An application for funding such PhD courses has been sent to the Research Council of Norway (RCN), in connection with the call for applications for funds for institutionally based strategic research projects following the national evaluation of the discipline of history. In addition, KULTRANS is trying to establish collaborations on doctoral programmes with several international universities and research institutes, among them the University of Copenhagen, the University of Leeds, and the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena.

## 8. External funding

KULTRANS is making concerted efforts to acquire external funding. In order to continue this effort, KULTRANS has allocated funds for a part-time (20%) position; the incumbent will be responsible for keeping abreast of the various programmes and calls for applications, and for coordinating and helping to write applications from the various KULTRANS communities.

During spring 2009, KULTRANS, partly in collaboration with other research communities, will submit two applications to the Research Council of Norway, two applications to HERA's Cultural Dynamics, and one application for financial support for an exploratory workshop (whose aim is to survey important new research areas):

- **Research Council of Norway**
  - Institutionally Based Strategic Research Projects for History (ISP-HIST): "Transformations/Innovations. Reading Texts, Seizing Change, Incorporating Nature"
  - The Research Programme for Assigning Cultural Values (KULVER): "The Development of 'The World': Concept Formation, Narration, and Representation as Processes of Assigning Cultural Values"
- **NordForsk**
  - Exploratory workshop: Materiality
- **HERA – Humanities in the European Research Area**
  - "Globalization, Nationalization, and Re-globalization in European Presents and Pasts"
  - "Nation Branding, Experience Economy and Author's Anniversaries: Cultural Negotiations between the Political, Economic, and Literary Fields"

Most of these applications stem from the management committee, but our future strategy is to involve other scholars more closely in the KULTRANS network by surveying existing expertise and helping to develop projects in collaboration with local research administrators. UiO-based projects that hitherto have applied for external funding in conjunction with KULTRANS, and with whom we might conceivably enter into a closer collaboration in the long term, include the following: Drude von der Fehr et al.: "Performing the Sacred, A Transcultural Exploration of the Sacred as Aesthetic Practice"; Tore Rem et al.: "Reputation Building, Experience Economy, and Author's Anniversaries: Assigning Cultural Values among the Political, Economic, and Literary Fields"; and Anne Birgitte Rønning et al.: "Negotiation and Opposition: Gender and the Assigning of Values in Art, Aesthetics, and Cultural Life". Moreover, KULTRANS will hold a one-day workshop on September 16, 2009, on how to develop projects and apply for external funding with participation from the Research Council of Norway and UiO's EU office.

Scholars often procrastinate when it comes to applying for external funding, and one of our objectives in this area is to facilitate a more long-term strategy. This can be achieved by

- identifying relevant national, Nordic, and European calls for applications and help scholars in the KULTRANS network to develop multi- and cross-disciplinary projects. Such calls for applications will continuously be published on the KULTRANS home page.
- surveying the resources and research interests that are to be found in the KULTRANS network. During 2010 we will create a database of scholars who are interested in developing cross- and multi-disciplinary projects.
- preparing scholars for future calls for applications so that they can start writing their applications well in advance of the deadlines. The target for 2010 is to maintain the application rate from 2009, that is, submit two applications to the Research Council of Norway, one application for support for exploratory workshops, and one application to a European funding source (ESF or the Seventh Framework Programme).
- helping set the terms for future funding opportunities. An extensive process precedes the various calls for applications (especially the European ones), and both the Seventh Framework Programme and ESF ask for direct feedback from scholars, for example in the form of strategic documents such as ESF's *Forward Looks Report* or by submitting proposals for themes to ESF's EUROCORES scheme. The target for the next two-year period is to produce such a strategic document.

## 10. Summary: Evaluation criteria

1. **Cross-disciplinary participation.** A decisive prerequisite for KULTRANS to fulfil its ambitions is that our projects, committees, and boards feature broad, cross-disciplinary participation and representation. The goal of cross-

disciplinary participation concerns not only ongoing seminars and research projects but also the larger conferences.

2. **Projects and external funding.** During 2009–11 KULTRANS shall have initiated, developed, and to a certain extent carried out a number of cross-disciplinary projects. For many of these projects we will apply for external funding, both national and international. The number of submitted applications for external funding will depend on the specific calls for application, and it is therefore difficult to set a specific target; however, an estimate can be found in section 8 above.
3. **Publication.** It is difficult to set clear publication goals for such a short-term period. Nevertheless, the number of publications mentioned in section 4 may roughly outline the publishing activity for the next two years. KULTRANS shall develop a long-term publication plan in 2009.
4. **Dissemination.** KULTRANS wants to disseminate its findings in a way that is more differentiated and targeted than has been the norm in many of the involved disciplines. The primary objective for the period is to create a dissemination plan that aims to identify which circuits of information that KULTRANS should be a part of, and then target these circuits. Furthermore, during each semester there will be at least one dissemination event aimed at a wider audience within one of the research areas or the overarching theme.
5. **PhD candidates and doctoral programmes.** In 2009/10, KULTRANS will recruit a class of eight PhD candidates. For these PhD candidates KULTRANS will organize a number of cross-disciplinary doctoral courses, conferences, and seminars, which will also be open to other PhD candidates.

BUDGET		
Contribution, UiO	2009	2010
<b>Academic director</b> 655,000 + 1.5%	664,825	664,825
<b>Operations 2009</b>	792,000	
- Kickoff-conference 150,000		
- Conference: Cosmopolitanism 120,000		
- Operating expenses, academic director 40,000		
- Seminar series: The World 50,000		
- Joint expenses KULTRANS 30,000		
- Language/translation services 40,000		
- Fees for external board representatives 20,000		
- Operating expenses, research areas 225,000		
- Part-time position (20%) for external funding 117,000		
<b>Drift 2010</b>		736,000
- Conference: Sentient Creatures 75,000		
- Conference: Herder 120,000		
- Doctoral courses 40,000		
- Operating expenses, academic director 40,000		
- Joint expenses KULTRANS 30,000		
- Language/translation services 40,000		
- Fees for external board representatives 20,000		
- Operating expenses, research areas 200,000		
- Part-time position (20%) for external funding 117,000		
- Advisory board 54,000		
<b>Particular dissemination events</b>	50,000	100,000
- Oslo Science Fair		
- Exhibitions		
- Joint database for foundational texts		
- Web page for dissemination		
- Collaboration with external actors		
<b>Total contribution, UiO</b>	1,506,825	1,500,825
<b>Contribution, HF</b>		
<b>Administrator</b> 555,000 + 1.5%	563,325	563,325
<b>7 PhD candidates from Sept. 1, 2009</b>	1,563,333	4,690,000
<b>Leaders</b> 2 x 20% regular salary (777,000+1.5%)	315,462	315,462
<b>Self-funding, academic staff, 3 person-years**</b>	1,950,000	1,950,000
<b>Total contribution, HF</b>	4,392,120	7,518,787
<b>Contribution SV</b>		
<b>Leaders</b> 2 x 20% regular salary (777,000+1.5%)	315,462	315,462
<b>1 PhD candidate from Sept. 1, 2009</b>	223,333	670,000
<b>Self-funding, academic staff, 2 person-years**</b>	1,300,000	1,300,000
<b>Total contribution, SV</b>	1,838,795	2,285,462
<b>Contribution JUS</b>		
<b>Leader</b> 20% regular salary (777,000+1.5%)	157,731	157,731
<b>Self-funding, academic staff, 1 person-year**</b>	650,000	650,000
<b>Total contribution, JUS</b>	807,731	807,731
<b>Contribution UV</b>		
<b>1 PhD candidate from Sept. 1, 2010 (recruited at UV)</b>		223,333
<b>Total contribution, UV</b>		223,333



\*\* The percentage of research time is tentatively stipulated on the basis of the scholars who are currently involved in the various research areas. Six person-years in total, divided among roughly 50 scholars over five years, amounts to somewhat over one person-year per year.