

Programme Plan for Kultrans 2012–13

Approved by the steering committee of Kultrans, November 11, 2011

The background for this document

Underlying Kultrans's programme plan for 2012–13 is a set of already existing steering documents, above all the mandate, the programme plan for 2009–11, and the annual reports for 2009 and 2010, which are all available on the Kultrans home page (in Norwegian); in addition, a self-evaluation of the first programme period is currently being written. The contents of these steering documents will not be repeated here. The primary goals, the overarching idea, and the organization will continue as described in sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the existing programme plan. The same applies to the publication and dissemination plans and to the plans for the doctoral programmes, as accounted for in sections 6 and 7. The new programme plan must in other words be read as an appendix, expansion, and elucidation of the *Programme Plan for Kultrans 2009–11*, primarily in regard to sections 4, 6, 7, and 8, which pertain to the academic content. Similarly, the new programme plan must necessarily include both the finalization of current projects and the launching of new ones.

I. Overarching theme: From “The World” to “Regimes of Temporality”

As part of its academic structure Kultrans shall have an overarching theme, which seeks to unite the interests and perspectives of the various research areas and which is primarily the academic director's responsibility. In line with both the theme for the programme as a whole and the overarching idea, the overarching theme for the first period 2009–11 was formulated as “The World: Concept, Notion, Reality”, which was the theme of the academic director's kick-off lecture, a seminar series, a Norwegian-language book that emerged from this series (Braun, Jordheim, Sandmo: *Verden* (The world), Oslo: Unipub 2011), and the major international conference *Conceptualizing the World*, with over seventy papers and participants from four continents. Jordheim is currently editing an English-language anthology from the conference (also entitled *Conceptualizing the World*), which is set to be published by Berghahn Books during the next programme period.

Moreover, this overarching theme has generated two new projects that will be at the core of Kultrans's activities in the next period:

- *Civility, Virtue and Emotions in Europe and Asia. History of Concepts as Entangled History from the 18th Century to the First World War.* This is a collaboration between Kultrans (represented by Helge Jordheim) and the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin (represented by Margrit Pernau), with participants from several European and Asian countries. The first workshop was held in Berlin in September 2011 and the second one will be held in Oslo in June 2012, with two further workshops being planned. The workshops will result in a book to be published by Oxford University Press.
- *The Encyclopaedia Genre in a Paradigm Shift.* This project, led by Helge Jordheim and funded by the Fritt Ord Foundation, includes participants from a variety of disciplines, such as media studies, information studies, and linguistics/rhetoric; a research assistant has also been hired. In addition to several academic publications published internationally, the project is planning an exhibition at the National Library in autumn 2012 on the history and future prospects of the encyclopaedia. Furthermore,

the new online form of the major Norwegian encyclopaedia SNL provides the Kultrans scholars with an excellent new dissemination platform. The project also benefits from its ties with the international Re:Enlightenment network, whose activities have included a major conference in London in summer 2011, where Jordheim presented the encyclopaedia project. The collaboration with Re:Enlightenment will continue in the next programme period.

Even as these projects are being finalized, a new overarching theme will be introduced. Our intention was always to follow “the world” with something that was linked to time and historicity, in the continuation of the transformation concept, such as it is presented in the title and the overarching idea in the *Programme Plan for Kultrans 2009–11*. The working title for the new overarching theme is “The Slow and the Fast: Temporal Regimes of Change and Continuity”, or simply “Transformations and Regimes of Temporality”. The theme will be led by Jordheim and Thomas Hylland Eriksen, who also serves as leader of research area 1, Mobility and Cultural Complexity. One of our objectives is to generate more activity at SV than we have managed so far. More specifically we are planning a kick-off conference for the new research area in spring or autumn 2012, and a major international conference in autumn 2013. Between these two milestones we will organize guest lectures with national and international scholars, who we will also include in more general dissemination events (when relevant). We are also planning a workshop with participation from scholars rooted in a wide range of disciplines and fields, such as geology, biology, economy, art, and politics, that feature temporal regimes with highly dissimilar speeds, rhythms, and scopes.

II. New plans for the research areas

Kultrans will continue to have five research areas in the new plan period 2012–13. During the first period, research areas 1 and 5 were taken over by new leaders with a new academic profile. The plans for the various research areas can be summarized as follows:

Research Area 1: Mobility and Cultural Complexity – Thomas Hylland Eriksen, SAI (SV)

Hylland Eriksen succeeded Ingjerd Hoem as the leader of this research area and has altered its academic profile. From the inception of Kultrans, there has been a desire to continue the work and insights from the CULCOM programme (Cultural Complexity in the New Norway), illustrated for example by the so-called Relay Race Seminar that was held in spring 2010. In its new form and with its new leader, research area 1 aims to fill some of same role as CULCOM, with a secondary objective being to involve more SV scholars in Kultrans. The activities in 2012 will consist of seminars and guest lectures with both our own and external scholars, with an eye toward gathering a group of scholars and identifying a more precise research theme. Given that Hylland Eriksen is also highly involved in the new overarching theme described above, there will also be a certain overlap between these areas.

Research Area 2: Foundational Texts – Karen Gammelgaard, ILOS (HF)

The research area has used seminars and workshops to define a research project and set up a highly cross-disciplinary team of scholars, with participants from all four Kultrans faculties as well as three international scholars. The project “Textualizing Democracy: The Norwegian Constitution 1814–2014” has received publication support from the Research Council of Norway’s Norwegian Constitution Bicentennial 2014 Research Initiative and will produce an English-language book that will be published by Berghahn Books in advance of the bicentennial in 2014; the activities in the research area consist of workshops related to the work on this book. The research area also includes another project that will continue into

2012 and 2013, “A Cross-Disciplinary Study of Euclid’s *Elements*”, instigated by Jens Braarvig and to be led by Amund Bjørnsnøs (pending the completion of his PhD dissertation in the beginning of 2012). The project is if possible even more cross-disciplinary than the Norwegian constitution project, given that it also incorporates the natural sciences. The goal of the project is to produce a Norwegian-language book on the reception of Euclid’s *Elements* within various disciplines and language areas. The project has already organized guest lectures by a number of internationally prominent Euclid scholars, and it will continue the work with a combination of guest lectures and workshops.

Research Area 3: Nature and the Natural – Kristin Asdal, TIK (SV)

Several projects and publication works have already been initiated in this research area and are to be finalized during the next period (all led by Kristin Asdal): the book project *Sentient Creatures*, based on a conference held in September 2010 with broad cross-disciplinary and international participation; a special issue of the journal *Science in Context*, titled “Science, Technology and Medicine in Scandinavia”; a special issue following the workshop Performing Environmental Change, in May 2010. Moreover, in a continuation of the PhD seminar Reading Texts, organized as a collaboration between TIK and Kultrans in November 2011, Asdal and Jordheim plan to work on a cross-disciplinary book on methodology for humanities scholars and social scientists. During 2012–13 this research area will also organize a seminar series whose aim is to discuss experiences and challenges related to “writing nature” in the arts and humanities and the social sciences. The seminars shall help lay the groundwork for the final of three PhD courses organized by Kultrans and TIK, Writing Nature, to be held in November 2012 in collaboration with the SAXO Institute (Denmark).

Research Area 4: Cultural Production: Aesthetics and Materiality – Anne Eriksen, IKOS (HF)

The activity in this research area will also primarily consist of working further on and finalizing already instigated projects: the book project *Eksemplets makt* (The power of examples), with participation from several faculties, which has been completed and is being reviewed by the Research Council of Norway for publication support; the book project *Tingenes tilsynkomst* (The emergence of things), which originates from the seminar and workshop activity in this research area and which is now well into the writing phase; the book project *From Antiquities to Heritage*, a monograph that was written by Anne Eriksen within the cross-disciplinary framework of Kultrans and that will be published as part of the Kultrans-initiated book series on Berghahn Books. In March 2012 this research area will also organize the research seminar Royal Glory with many leading international scholars. Last but not least, the most stabile and enduring seminar series within Kultrans, Museological Lunch (led by Brita Brenna), will continue.

Research Area 5: Law and Politics in a Global Society – Inger Johanne Sand, IOR (JUS)

Sand was appointed leader of research area 5 after Cecilia Bailliet and Katja Franko Aas had completed their project on cosmopolitanism, which resulted in a book published by Routledge (*Cosmopolitan Justice and its Discontents*, 2011). In the present period, Sand has launched a project entitled Transnational Law and Sociological Constitutionalism, which will continue into the 2012–13 period with the goal of publishing an international anthology; in conjunction with this work, seminars, workshops, and lectures will be organized with participants from various disciplines and countries. In addition, the research area will help organize a PhD seminar in spring 2012 with Gunther Teubner on sociological constitutionalism. In connection with the publication of the book *Hybrid Forms of Governance*, which Sand has co-edited, a

seminar on the hybrid concept will be held.

III. Doctoral programmes

A group of nine PhD candidates from HF (7), SV (1), and UV (1) are affiliated with Kultrans. All nine have a dual affiliation, in that they are attached to their respective departments, even while a major part of their doctoral training and supervision transpires within Kultrans. Much effort has therefore been invested in bringing the candidates together as a group, which, even though their individual projects are highly disparate, benefits greatly from joint discussions. The PhD candidates and their projects are a major focal point for the Kultrans activities: every candidate has at least one supervisor who is a member of the management committee, which includes the leaders of the five research areas. Furthermore, the research programmes, under the auspices of the academic director, organize various forms of joint instruction, doctoral seminars, study groups, lunches, and workshops; such activities will of course continue in the next programme period 2012–13. Some of the joint instruction takes place in conjunction with work on a common book project, an anthology with the working title *Understanding Transformations*. Furthermore, the PhD candidates will be included in other relevant Kultrans activities – for instance, seven of the candidates presented their projects at the Conceptualizing the World conference, where they received much constructive and useful feedback.

Though we will continue such activities in the future, our focus will gradually shift to ensuring that each candidate is making progress and to taking care of his or her needs for supervision, comments, and discussion partners. As the submission deadline nears, all the PhD candidates will be given the opportunity to present their projects in a mock dissertation defence. In order to further strength the doctoral training, the PhD candidates will be encouraged to instigate courses, conferences, and seminars that are directly relevant for one or more of the projects in the group; cf. the seminar “World-building: The Logic of Science Fiction and Fantasy” in June 2011, which was instigated and organized by Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay. In 2012 we will hold another two such conferences/doctoral seminars, one on interdisciplinarity (“Academic Demarcations. The Tensions Between Disciplines and Interdisciplinarity in Science and Higher Education”, in September 2012, organized by Vidar Grøtta in collaboration with PFI/UV) and one on popular culture (in October 2012, organized by Audun Solli and Hans Erik Næss); in addition, Herdis Hølleland and Siv Ringdal have plans to hold a methodology seminar in 2013. Autumn 2012 we will also organize the last of three week-long doctoral courses in collaboration with TIK, Writing Nature (see section II, research area 3).

IV. Publication

Given that Kultrans involves so many different disciplines, it would be difficult to employ a single, common publication strategy. Of course, the scholars that are involved in the various Kultrans activities and projects will primarily publish their findings in journals and other channels associated with the given discipline, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. When we nonetheless are so heavily committed to joint publications, as indicated by the plans for the respective research areas, it is partly in order to establish a clearer direction and clearer goals for the cross-disciplinary activity, partly in order to uphold the project’s cross-disciplinary nature also in the dissemination of the findings. Several Norwegian-language books are planned, being published, or have already been released, including the following: *Verden* (The world), by Braun/Jordheim/Sandmo, autumn 2011; *Rødt og hvitt. Om kvinners*

væsker (Red and white: On women's fluids), by Lie/Bondevik, to be published spring 2012; *Eksemplets makt* (The power of examples), by Anne Eriksen, to be published autumn 2012; and *Tingenes tilsynekomst* (The emergence of things), by Anne Eriksen et al., to be published spring 2013. Furthermore, the academic director has initiated a book series on the renowned academic publisher Berghahn Books, with the tentative title *Time and the World: Interdisciplinary Studies on Cultural Transformations*, with an international editorial board and peer review; though the series has been created for publications from Kultrans, it is of course open to other scholars. For titles that are slated for publication in 2012–13, see the various research areas above.

V. Dissemination

Ever since its inception, Kultrans has taken part in the Oslo Science Fair in the centre of Oslo, every year with a new theme (representations of the world, science fiction, and encyclopaedias, respectively). We will continue this activity, since we believe that the Oslo Science Fair affords a unique opportunity to disseminate findings from various projects to a young audience. In the previous period we organized numerous events at the House of Literature in Oslo in conjunction with research seminars and conferences, including ones on enlightenment and world-building; we will also continue such activities, starting off in April 2012 with a public debate meeting on Norwegian aquaculture. Several of the Kultrans participants also figure frequently in the press or on the radio or television. Another highly relevant dissemination channel is our home page, which is the single most important source of information about Kultrans.

In addition to the above efforts, Kultrans has sought to collaborate with institutions that specialize in dissemination and public activities. The most important of these institutions is the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) in Oslo, which holds courses on intercultural understanding and human rights. In collaboration with the EWC and the Federal Agency for Civic Education (BPB) in Berlin, we are currently developing a digital tool for conceptual history, which will allow key concepts to be used in the training of teachers and other disseminators of knowledge; a beta version is already being used in a joint effort between Norway and Germany, and the work on this glossary will continue throughout 2012–13. In conjunction with the project “The Encyclopaedia Genre in a Paradigm Shift”, and in close collaboration with the National Library, we are also currently preparing an exhibition concerning the history of the encyclopaedia, to be held autumn 2012. Furthermore, both the glossary of key concepts and the online SNL encyclopaedia provide our scholars with an excellent opportunity to disseminate their findings to a wider audience.

VI. External funding

One of the major aims of Kultrans has also been to procure external funding for cross-disciplinary research, whether from national or international sources, and we will continue to pursue this strategy. Since Pia Lane, who was employed part-time (20%) in Kultrans to work on external funding (in particular from the EU), has begun in a new job elsewhere, the academic director and the administrative coordinator now spearhead these efforts, and there is no intent of hiring a replacement for this position for 2012–13. The Research Council of Norway is currently assessing two applications closely linked to Kultrans, concerning project and publication support, respectively. Moreover, we are closely monitoring the council's new humanities programme SAMKUL as well as the new HERA Joint Research Programme “Cultural Encounters”; we will continuously review whether any of the calls for applications are relevant for us. That said, it is also evident that many of the Kultrans projects will be in

the midst of being finalized in 2012–13, so that applying for further external funds will be somewhat less relevant than was the case in the first programme period.

VII. The future

Presupposing that 2012–13 will be the final Kultrans period, it seems natural to start thinking of how to continue and develop the considerable cross-disciplinary expertise and the national and international networks that the programme has established over a five-year period. One particular idea that has emerged is to spend some time and effort in the final programme period to start the work of applying to become a Centre of Excellence, an effort that could continue after Kultrans has been completed and that could result in a competitive CoE application in the next application round. Our supposition is that an application within the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences field (HUMSAM) will have a far greater chance of succeeding if it has a broad cross-disciplinary foundation. Furthermore, such an application should utilize one of the clear advantages that the arts and humanities, and partly the social sciences, enjoy vis-à-vis other disciplines, namely the ability to thematize, explore, and discuss time and historicity, and thereby counter the presentism and presumptions of permanence that underlie several other scientific approaches. The new overarching theme “Transformations and Regimes of Temporality” has been created in part to inspire such a reflection and to establish a national and international network. It is thereby possible for Kultrans to instigate activities that in themselves have a scientific interest, but that simultaneously help develop a future CoE application. During 2013 Kultrans wants to develop an infrastructure and recruit a group of people who can work systematically to develop a CoE application, also after Kultrans has been completed.