A painting of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a stream flows through a field. Several dark-colored cows are grazing near the water. In the middle ground, there are trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. A small white building is visible among the trees. In the background, a large field of golden-yellow flowers stretches towards the horizon. A bright, multi-colored rainbow arches across the sky on the right side. The sky is a mix of grey and blue, with several small white birds flying in the upper left quadrant.

Sustainable Humanities

Report from the Committee
on the National Plan for the Future of the Humanities

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

Sustainable Humanities



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Sustainable Humanities

**Report from the Committee
on the National Plan for the Future of the Humanities**

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

This publication was created by order of the
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

At the invitation of the Commission, José van Dijk, Ineke Sluiter and
Doeko Bosscher were interviewed by Gerard van Westerloo for the purposes
of this report. The Commission would like to thank them for their
willingness to cooperate and for the views expressed in a private capacity.

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Last but not least, how can universities nurture and inspire the humanities? Humanists today often feel neglected and unappreciated. [...] In years to come those tensions could easily be exacerbated by the growing emphasis on science, leaving humanists feeling more and more marginalized. That should not be. The new advances in sciences offer the possibility of prolonging human life, destroying human life, transforming human life artificially in ways that challenge the very meaning of what it is to be human. In the face of such prospects, the traditional focus of the humanities on questions of value, of meaning, of ethics, are more important than ever before. Such questions are extremely difficult. They do not lend themselves to testable theories or to empirically verified results. But they are no less essential if we are to make sense of the changes that science thrusts upon us and create a society in which we all can live fulfilling lives. So far from marginalizing humanities, universities must look for ways to encourage humanists to address such questions in ways we can all understand, so that they can help us build a world in which our scientific advances do not overwhelm us, but are made to serve humane purposes.

Derek Bok, President of Harvard University (2007)¹



Foreword

The present strong position of the humanities is under pressure. There is no doubt that the humanities are flourishing in the Netherlands: the number of students is growing, as a rule humanities scholars achieve at a high level, and their work in education and research, although often unrecognised, affects very widely ranging areas of our culture.

However, there are a few – inter-related – structural problems, which is why the committee now submitting this report was formed. The problems are partly connected with financial shortfalls, and partly with a lack of clear-cut strategic choices in the humanities sector itself.

Obviously something needs to be done to solve the financial shortfalls. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research should take a few specific, coordinated measures to eliminate these shortfalls effectively. But the sector itself must also take concrete steps to ensure a sustainable future. We believe that the urgently needed financial resources should be made available only on the condition that plainly laid out and realistic plans are submitted, containing clearly substantiated choices regarding future developments. This is the essence of what this report proposes.

In these plans priority should be given to inter-university collaboration and high-quality research – and of course also to the intense intermeshing of teaching and research which characterises these domains and to their huge and crucially important potential to make an impact on society. Bear in mind their place in secondary education and their significance for lifelong learning, both of which must be nourished by vital humanities studies which are not introverted. Remember too all those expert commentaries, columns, books and other

cultural and social statements by practitioners of the humanities which leaven our society every day in a way almost taken for granted. We heartily agree with Derek Bok that ‘the traditional focus of the humanities on questions of value, of meaning, of ethics, is more important than ever before’. It is hard to imagine a society without this contribution, and it is of paramount importance to our society that it should continue to be made at a high level and of high quality.

Each of the humanities Faculties should draft plans like this for the future, and the Executive Boards should support them in word and deed, before the new financial resources are actually allocated. This increased capacity is also necessary to enable young talent to move on, so that the vacancies which will soon arise can be filled promptly and at a high level of quality. This is in fact one of the biggest stumbling blocks as regards ongoing strength – too many talented young people with proven capacities are in danger of being lost to the practice of the humanities discipline which has captured their hearts and minds.

Nearly everyone is sympathetic to the humanities, but at the same time inclined to underestimate what is required for them to continue to thrive and what the Netherlands would miss out on without their ongoing strength. Value can never be taken for granted: it requires maintenance and demands a price. This is what is at stake, and that is why this report is an appeal both to the administrative and funding bodies and to the researchers and lecturers themselves to work together to safeguard that strength, on the basis of a shared realisation of the value and necessity of the humanities.

Job Cohen, Chair

1

cd
dvd **multimedia**

2

THE **romans**

3

REISEN **reisen**

4

ART **kunst**

5

REISEN **reisen**

Introduction

The humanities are an established, richly varied and flourishing field of intellectual activities. This large family of disciplines includes the study of languages and cultures, literature and the arts, history and archaeology, religions, ethics, gender and philosophy, in their widely ranging forms, including important sections of communication and media studies.

The humanities are one of the five great areas of academic study, the others being the exact sciences, medicine, technology and the behavioural and social sciences. Each of these areas should flourish in the Netherlands and be part of the international academic vanguard, today and in the future just as in the past. The Netherlands and its universities have a duty to maintain this position. The subject of this report is what will be required to ensure that our humanities flourish.

This report outlines the prerequisites for sustainable development of this academic area, including recommendations for all parties involved. This was the remit given to the Committee on the National Plan for the Future of the Humanities by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science.²

The committee was asked to draw up a national plan describing the value and position of the humanities in the Netherlands, also in an international perspective.

The objective is to provide a frame of reference for decisions regarding sustainable and high-quality practice of the humanities. This is why the report is called ‘Sustainable Humanities’, a title which refers not only to safeguarding the continuity of these disciplines, but also to helping to develop a new and vibrant future for the humanities.

In forming its views, the committee did not focus only on the purely academic value of flourishing humanities, the organisation of the academic field, its attraction for new generations of students and academic researchers, and the quality of its achievements. It was also guided by the conviction that sustainable and high-quality humanities are also of considerable social importance. This can be viewed in economic terms, but it is also a factor of socio-cultural significance. The quality of life in society benefits from and can be raised by an active and plainly visible humanities sector, both in teaching and research and in services to society. These interrelationships are obvious, but they are seldom explicitly pointed out, let alone acknowledged as an essential element of policy. In many cases the value of this academic field for the whole of education is underused, and its significance for the social debate about moral, cultural and ethical issues does not receive the attention it deserves.



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ונוקפלי
לאאלר

I Character and scope of the humanities

Definition and size

The humanities study expressions of the human mind, as representations and interpretations of the world. In Dutch the term *geesteswetenschappen* is now often used for humanities, following the German term *Geisteswissenschaften*, but the terms *alfawetenschappen*, *humaniora* and *taal- en cultuurwetenschappen* are also used.³

In the Netherlands there are four universities with integrated humanities Faculties, four where the humanities disciplines of the arts, philosophy and theology are organised in separate Faculties, and two with Faculties of Cultural Studies.⁴ At present about 2000 FTE of permanent academic staff work at these humanities Faculties. With over 8,500 first-year students, they currently account for almost 20% of the total annual university student intake in the Netherlands. The student numbers have been rising steadily for ten years, although not all humanities disciplines have shared equally in this growth.⁵

Dynamics and breadth

Being an academic field in which discovery, collecting, classification and interpretation are some of the predominant methods, the humanities are constantly returning to their own past. Because humanities studies are specific to their own time and context, new approaches must continually be found for the same subjects, while at the same time the old era-specific interpretations still retain their value.

This 'great chain of learning' does not mean that the humanities do not evolve. If we compare the current situation in the humanities with that of roughly 25 years ago, we see that many new approaches and specialisms have arisen. Partly under the influence of

economic issues a need has emerged for multidisciplinary fields such as area studies, in which the study of the history, language and literature of a certain area – such as South East Asia or Latin America – is combined with perspectives from outside the humanities such as economics, law, political science and sociology. Societal and technological developments triggered the rise of film and television studies, media studies, gender studies and cultural studies. New disciplines like these usually begin on a small scale, rapidly attract many students, and then eventually find the right academic balance. This requires careful selection of research staff and the development of robust research programmes. Sometimes this leads to growing pains: in a short space of time there are many students, but too few staff, because staff are tied down in other departments where there are fewer students.⁶

The modern humanities meet the exact sciences in the field of language and speech technology, which began as an auxiliary field but has now grown into a separate discipline. In this field the Netherlands is regarded as one of the leading countries in Europe.⁷ In recent decades the plethora of IT applications such as digitisation, cataloguing, text corpora and image research has led to flourishing new research fields and related changes in the teaching curriculum. A good example is the Rembrandt Research Project, which has given rise to intensive collaboration between humanities disciplines and the exact sciences through the use of new technologies.

Worldwide

All scholarship is international, and the humanities are no exception. Not only does the research itself take place in an international context, but humanities research is universal by nature. Because the object of study is cultural

expressions from all over the world and from every era, the humanities reflect the world's multiplicity of languages and traditions. It is here that the special significance of these disciplines lies: they open a window on cultural diversity. The focus is often local or national, but this creates opportunities for comparison and exchange at the international level.

Adequate knowledge of other languages and cultures is an important prerequisite for the Netherlands' international position and its relations with the rest of the world. The humanities are therefore also of great importance as regards the position of the Dutch business sector in Europe and the rest of the world.

Conversely, the Dutch humanities also play an important role in making Dutch culture (such as seventeenth-century painting and the VOC archives) accessible and available to other countries.

Preserving, archiving and disseminating heritage

Within the Netherlands the humanities act as preservers, archivists and disseminators of the national heritage to be found in language, history, art, religion and ethical ideas. Not everything that is historical can be preserved. The right selection of valuable buildings, landscapes, urban constructions, objects from everyday life in the past and art objects depends on trained art historians and historians who can give expert recommendations to urban, provincial and national authorities. Their analyses, based on training in the humanities, can make the significance of these items clear. The same applies to non-tangible heritage such as literature, music or certain traditional customs. It is only through explanation and adaptation to the present era that these things can remain accessible to future generations, and once again it requires training to be able to explain their historical background and value.

ASIDE

The Dutch East India Company archives as World Heritage

The Netherlands has a great tradition of studying the Far East ('Oriental Studies'), which has its roots in the country's colonial and commercial relationships with the Far East. This tradition began in the 19th century with outstanding scholars such as Snouck Hurgronje and Von Siebold, but in the 21st century it is still very much alive. The huge importance of the 25 million pages of archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) is now recognised throughout the world. In the TANAP project (Towards A New Age of Partnership, see www.tanap.net) scholars are studying these archives and working to make them accessible on a large scale. Even more important is that in the context of this project researchers from countries with which the Netherlands had commercial relations in the past, such as Korea, Japan and Indonesia, are using the wealth of material in the VOC archives to study their own national history.

Diversity and scale

The humanities include a huge variety of disciplines and manifestations, often in small-scale environments. Disciplines which involve mainly individual research stand side by side with bigger, interdisciplinary research groups. The concept of 'focus and mass' is by no means irrelevant to the humanities – just think of the huge impact that Spinoza Prizes can have on these disciplines. In recent years these awards have enabled several outstanding humanities scholars to build up research groups

which conduct collaborative research. But some small teaching and research centres are also of great value.

In other words, at the same time the humanities include disciplines that are small by nature and others that work better on a larger scale. We must be prepared and have the courage to appreciate the value of this diversity, which is in fact a worldwide phenomenon. Smallness of scale merits special attention, because it is vulnerable by definition. Sometimes the continued existence of a discipline – or part of a discipline – depends entirely on one individual who specialises in it. In recent years important auxiliary disciplines such as palaeography, papyrology, etc. have lost their last chairs in the Netherlands or have been nominated to do so. A similar fate threatens academic programmes offered at only one university in the Netherlands. Once a discipline has disappeared, it is not easy to get it back or to ‘buy it’ somewhere else. Then continuity of academic practice is lost, and that means, for example, that the discipline is no longer updated in library and documentation services and that contact with the international academic community is lost.

As far as the humanities are concerned, policy makers have to be constantly on the lookout for ways to ensure that big and small, classical and modern flourish in the right proportions. High-quality humanities scholarship must be served according to its needs, and that requires a keen eye for detail on the part of the administrators.

Accessibility and complexity

Humanities scholars work in fields in which language is of paramount importance. These fields are generally accessible – they are conceivable and fascinating to many people, which means that potentially humanities research can reach a wide audience. This is something to cherish, because their capacity to engage the general

public means that the humanities have an important social mandate. At the same time, culture is an extremely complex research field. To fulfil this social mandate, the humanities often have to make difficult matters accessible to a wide public. This requires highly specialised capabilities. The humanities must not only participate in the academic forum, but also in a significant and growing social forum (citizens interested in culture and history) and a professional forum of – for example – teachers and journalists.

Publication culture

The humanities have a publication culture of their own, in which the monograph occupies a prominent place. Within the humanities, articles in English focused solely on peers in refereed academic journals do not have the predominant role they do in some other academic fields. For research into Dutch literature or Islamic law, English-language journals are not necessarily the most appropriate medium to reach the targeted public. Apart from that, for many prominent humanities scholars articles are no more than warming-up exercises for large books which are their main means of making themselves known, not only in the academic arena, but sometimes also to a wider public. In this respect the Dutch humanities conform to worldwide practice, as is evidenced for example by the work of Heineken award winners such as Jacques le Goff (Paris) and Jonathan Israel (Princeton). Some of the best results of humanities research are circulated widely and reach the very capillaries of society.

Infrastructure

Libraries, archives and museums are to the humanities what laboratories are to science. Partly because of the cumulative character of the humanities – often new knowledge does not replace the old knowledge but takes its place beside it as a new interpretation – these storage

places must meet high standards. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that libraries, archives and museums change in character rapidly. Major digitisation projects have led to academically acceptable dissemination of data collections on an unparalleled scale and at a high level. Because of their digital form, these sources and publications provide untold opportunities for teaching and research to ask new and different questions and to test hypotheses in ways which were impossible a short time ago. Advanced search options, text and data mining, and mashup techniques focusing on massive text, image and data collections offer new research perspectives. This 'digitisation in context' is an important job for today's humanities. These are the new virtual laboratories of the humanities, which are different from the traditional storage places and require hefty investments (often also in an international framework). 'Retrodigitisation' is of great importance in this context because older objects, publications and texts still remain relevant in humanities research. Internationally the Netherlands has a prominent position in large-scale digitisation projects.

Source publications, text editions and data corpora are also an important component of the humanities research infrastructure. The Netherlands has a long tradition in this field, but experience does not alter the fact that the preparation of these products is usually a costly and time-consuming affair, often carried out by specialised institutes such as the Huygens Institute and the Institute of Netherlands History.

Education

With language, literature and history, and subjects relating to art, religion and philosophy, and society, the humanities occupy a central position in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. The pivotal role of humanities disciplines in basic schooling, general

ASIDE

Ongoing digitisation

The Netherlands occupies a frontline position in large-scale digitisation projects.

- The Koninklijke Bibliotheek (National Library of the Netherlands) was the initiator of *Staten-Generaal Digitaal* (digitisation of Dutch parliamentary proceedings) and the Digital Databank for Newspapers, and participates in the European Digital Library.
- The Netherlands Institute for Art History provides a comprehensive overview of digitised art-historical images through databases which are accessible to the public.
- Since 2000 the Digital Library of Dutch Literature (www.dbnl.org) has digitised a million pages of cultural history sources according to academic standards. At present about 40,000 pages are added each month and the library receives about 20,000 visitors a day, not only from Dutch-speaking areas but also from much further afield (United States, the Far East, South Africa)
- Dutch Print Online, a collaborative venture between the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and the Amsterdam and Leiden university libraries, aims to make all Dutch books from between 1781 and 1800 (a total of 1.3 million pages) available digitally. This is seen as the first step towards making all Dutch books up to 1800 available digitally.

knowledge and social and cultural education is of paramount importance. Nevertheless, in the Netherlands this crucial role of the humanities is often underestimated – unlike in the English-speaking countries, where it is much more clearly acknowledged that the humanities play a quintessential role in training young people to become mature and responsible citizens. Liberal arts education and the central position of humanities in core curricula are compelling examples of this. Fortunately the significance of the humanities is being rediscovered to an increasing extent in the Netherlands. A solid foundation in the humanities is indispensable to every branch of academic knowledge: medicine, law, environmental control, infrastructure developments, communication, technology. All students – including science students – are confronted with decisions which have far-reaching moral consequences for society and its future. These decisions must therefore be made on the basis of an awareness of non-material values which has been developed through the study of philosophy, literature and history.

Labour market position

Good humanities scholars do well in many positions in society.⁸ Education has always been an important sector, especially for history and language and literature graduates, but over the past few decades the employment market for humanities graduates has expanded considerably. Faculty labour market research has shown that nowadays about a quarter of humanities graduates end up working in education and research. Another important employer of humanities graduates is the government. Over 20% of the graduates find employment in the national, provincial or local government, with jobs relating to policy, advice and communication. The banking and insurance industry also provides employment for a considerable number of humanities

graduates, as do journalism, publishing, the book trade and the world of audiovisual and digital media. A growing number of graduates, often those who have done broad humanities programmes such as media studies or communication studies, find jobs in the creative industry, which now provides work for over 3% of the total Dutch labour force and has grown by 25% over the past ten years.⁹

Humanities graduates themselves attribute their success on the labour market mainly to the language-focused character of their training. Their written and oral skills of expression and their ability to engage with other cultures are aspects of their training which are highly appreciated on the labour market.¹⁰

Society

While society is not clamouring for assistance from the humanities, at present there is a high degree of receptivity for expertise in these disciplines. Issues of cultural meaning and value are important to individual citizens, businesses, government bodies and institutions, and they require nurturing and sensitive interpretation. In the modern media culture this receptivity certainly manifests itself in a different way, but it has increased rather than diminished. Humanities monographs frequently become bestsellers; exhibitions and cultural festivals sometimes draw unparalleled numbers of visitors; company histories meet high standards; cultural tourism is flourishing; there is a big market for CDs with humanities-related lectures.¹¹ The ‘Canon van Nederland’ (Canon of Dutch History) – a classic example of the social relevance of humanities knowledge – met with a huge response. People are increasingly interested in their own individual or collective history and – partly due to increased physical and digital mobility – also in the history and culture of other areas, countries and peoples. Moreover, a growing need is felt for the

interpretation of cultural codes, standards and values which are different – both in the Dutch multicultural society itself and in the world as a global village. Many Dutch humanities scholars frequently appear in the media as commentators or walking encyclopaedias.

The humanities are ideally suited to meet this wide range of needs. They can do this through direct services, but also by providing a framework and fertile ground. For example, they have the expertise required to set up and support museums, art collections and cultural heritage.¹² Contrary to what is often thought, the humanities are of considerable ‘use’ to society.

The humanities not only show that human beings assign and live with an enormously rich variety of symbols, but also help to keep those symbols alive and accessible, and to make them available for new interpretations and a new future. Symbols themselves – historical figures, stories, special events, texts, paintings – have strong power to educate and give direction, provided they are in fact available and known. In modern society this is the task of the humanities, which preserve and process important sources of meaning and purpose in life and make them available to individuals and societies. In principle, the material collected and preserved in museums, archives and libraries offers each new generation new ways to define and develop its own identity. This may be a national or local identity, an identity as a man or a woman, as a believer or a non-believer, as a professional or as an athlete. Identification can enable

someone to give direction to an ambition and at the same time to make connections with the achievements of models from the past.

Inspiration can also be drawn from learning and comparing that which is not part of one’s own generation or one’s own environment. Knowledge of foreign languages is of great economic significance for a country which depends on foreign trade for more than half of its GNP, but it also provides access to the literature and history of other societies so that people can compare them with their own. Religion and philosophy are closely related to the humanities, and in these areas again comparisons enable people to determine their own position, whether or not they are inspired by what was the case in former times or in other places.

Precisely at a time when there are serious concerns about the preservation of social cohesion in the Dutch community and the possibilities of living peacefully side by side with people who ‘think differently’ and ‘act differently’, the humanities have a role to play which goes far beyond the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage or the practical benefits of learning other languages. In the words of Robert Putnam, it is the humanities which provide bridging and bonding. Investing in the humanities means investing in social and cultural capital in a way which also yields considerable societal rewards. The humanities safeguard the future of our own society as a meaningful world which new generations will also strive to maintain.





**Media professor José van Dijck:
‘It’s only humanities scholars who are asked
“What use are you to us?”’**

Gerard van Westerloo

No – she can’t claim a tradition comparable to the study of Mediterranean literature, the use of the word *telos* in Homer or the heroic deeds of William the Silent. Twenty years ago her field did not yet exist. She helped to create it herself, she says. The field in question is media studies, and today twenty per cent of all students who study humanities at her university – the University of Amsterdam – choose this field.

Professor José van Dijck, Professor of Media and Culture in Amsterdam, refers to the field as a ‘flagship’, ‘a big student puller’ and ‘one of the new strengths’ in

the Faculty of Humanities, where she was appointed Dean in early 2008. Another strong ‘growth market’ is European Studies – which is also the result of what she calls ‘a clear shift’ away from the more specialised programmes towards the more general ones which combine several fields. While students are flocking to her department, other fields, such as language studies, are faced with waning interest.

She herself is more or less a personification of that shift, she says. She studied Dutch language and literature in Utrecht and after graduating went to the United

States, where Media Studies were gaining popularity. She did a PhD at the University of California, San Diego, assisted by both a supervisor in the Arts Faculty and a professor of Communication Science. Her thesis was about the public debate on a topic that was brand-new at the time, namely in vitro fertilisation (IVF) or 'test tube babies'. In 2008 she talks about it as enthusiastically as if she had just finished her PhD thesis yesterday, rather than in 1991. Within the extremely short space of six years, she says, there had been a landslide in the public debate in America about IVF. At first there had been practically unimpeded opposition to the medical magicians who were violating the divine order. Then followed a period of normalisation during which scientists and interested parties negotiated with each other. And after just six years the test tube baby was included in health insurance packages, so that the final stage of legalisation had been reached.

José van Dijck: 'Later I saw that the model I had developed then to fathom that complex debate was used again in discussions about cloning or the use of stem cells.' Her greatest interest is in what she calls the 'representation' of academic findings in the media – not only in text, but also in images. How could that happen, she wondered. How could such a huge change in public perception and appraisal take place in such a short time? She tries to make her students aware of questions like these and possible answers to them. She shows them different documentaries about the same topic, for instance about Dolly the cloned sheep. One documentary treats the subject like a remake of Frankenstein, a rewrite of the brave new world, enhanced by images from the world of science fiction. The other does not do this; instead, it lets doctors, parents and other interested parties talk dispassionately about the subject, without background music to stimulate thirst for sensation. José van Dijck: 'Sometimes I show as many as five

different approaches to make it clear in how many different ways the media can frame the same subject. My students have to become thoroughly familiar with this reflective component. They have to become aware of how the media represent something and why they opt for a particular approach.'

She has no complaints as far as her own discipline is concerned: plenty of students find their way to media studies. But she is not so happy about appreciation for the humanities in general. Just compare the position of the humanities with that of science. The exact sciences are confronted with a significant shortage of students, while they enjoy much higher prestige across the whole spectrum of academia. At least eighty per cent of all budgets for large-scale research goes to science disciplines with their small numbers of students, whereas the humanities, with their large numbers, receive very little research funding. José van Dijck: 'That causes friction'. According to her, the degree of difficulty of an academic field is inversely proportionate to student interest and to the teaching effort required from humanities lecturers. A student-lecturer ratio of one to one is not uncommon in science disciplines, whereas in the humanities the ratio is more likely to be one to twenty-one, 'but please don't quote me on the exact figures.' Once again – she herself has nothing to complain about. Five years ago it still took a lot of effort on her part and that of her media studies colleagues to acquire any funding apart from that provided directly by the government. Now she can offer many graduates PhD positions thanks to indirect funding through the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). This is a great boost for a new discipline like this. But small disciplines in the humanities such as mediaeval history or classics, which have traditionally focused strongly on the preservation of cultural values, are in a much more difficult position.

Moreover, the criteria set by the NWO are very often based on practice among the exact sciences. They want large-scale projects, preferably with teams of researchers, and these are supplanting individual research such as labour-intensive text editions. Publications in internationally renowned journals are the most important standard. But in the humanities research is usually conducted by smaller teams and often even by scholars who are operating individually, ‘and I don’t mean that in a negative sense at all,’ and are finding things increasingly difficult. José van Dijck: ‘The pecking order is first science, then the social sciences, and right at the bottom the humanities.’

José van Dijck has just published a book with Stanford University Press titled *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*, in which she discusses the relationship between the new media and cultural memory. Since the arrival of digital technology, she says, the way people record their autobiographic memories has changed completely. In the past people stored their analogue photos for the purpose of preserving their past. When she now sees her students taking photos with their mobile phones and immediately sending them on to friends, she understands that the main point of this is not to record but to communicate; and in fact these digitally manipulable photos serve not so much to document people’s memories but to shape them. People become the manipulators of their own memories. They enhance their beach photos with palm trees which were not really there. Of course, in the past people also used to cut the man who had abandoned them or their daughter out of photos. But cut and paste has now become one of the normal phenomena which blur the distinction between the authentic and the doctored.

José van Dijck: ‘My students come from a completely different world than I do – the worldwide world,

shall we say – and I believe that I have to make them understand that these changes have consequences. Take for instance the difference between plagiarism and non-plagiarism. It used to be easy to distinguish between the two. But for my students copy and paste is the most natural thing in the world. Most of them are very ingenious at making slight changes to information they have found on the web and presenting the result as text of their own. It has become much more complicated to explain what sources are and what source acknowledgments mean.’

She is not particularly keen to be an enforcer of rules. Her concern is to teach her students to ask the right critical questions – about Google for example, and about the fact that the ranking of the information presented through this search engine is anything but objective. The algorithm, which is partly secret and protected by a patent, is driven by commercial interests. She calls this the ‘googlisation of knowledge’, and this whole googlisation process determines how we acquire information and produce knowledge. Her students must understand this, so they can take a critical view.

She comes back to the position of the humanities in general. They are faced with a big problem. Doctors make people better, lawyers ensure that society runs in an orderly fashion, sociologists contribute solutions to integration problems. But humanities scholars? José van Dijck: ‘This is much trickier for us. Over and over again we have to listen to people saying, “What you do is great, but of what use is it?” As soon as the bosses, the politicians or society ask us, “Of what use are you to us?”, we start to feel small and insignificant. But the questions we humanities scholars raise about the role of language, images, art and culture are immensely important, even if the answers cannot always be measured.’

I ask her what she would like to change as the Dean. She doesn't need much time to think about it. The entire training of teachers, she says, has been moved from the university to teacher training colleges. She is very concerned that this development has had an adverse effect on the quality of secondary education. In this respect the Faculties have relinquished an important task. In the past there was nothing unusual about a teacher who was writing a PhD as well as teaching. She would like this to become normal again. To be sure,

it would be very difficult to fund it. As it is there is hardly enough funding to train young research assistants. 'But what we need very badly is an incentive to raise the quality of secondary school teachers. As Marita Mathijsen suggested in a column in the newspaper NRC, teachers should be given the opportunity to become not "trainee research assistants" but "teacher-trainee research assistants". At the moment there is no funding at all for this, but it is something I would really be prepared to stick my neck out for.'



II What is the state of affairs regarding the humanities in the Netherlands?

In several respects things are looking good for the humanities in the Netherlands. For the past ten years student numbers have been rising steadily – although not all disciplines have benefited equally from this growth. There is considerable and growing social interest in the products of teaching and research in the humanities, and the quality of that teaching and research is high. In practically all the humanities disciplines review committees have found the programmes to be good or very good.¹³ That Dutch humanities scholars can hold their own with top-ranking international experts in their field is also shown by their great success in acquiring international research funding. For example, in the four rounds of the European Young Investigators Award scheme (EURYI) a Dutch humanities researcher has won a prize each year, which is unique in comparison both with other academic fields and with other participating countries. The results of the ‘starting grants’ recently allocated by the European Research Council (ERC) are also strikingly positive; Dutch humanities researchers did exceptionally well in this first round. Of the 24 Dutch researchers who have been awarded grants to date, five have been from the humanities.¹⁴

Although there is plenty of good news about the humanities, at the same time it cannot be denied that there are considerable problems, which mean that this domain should be seriously concerned about its future. While the humanities are certainly not doing badly, they are forced to let some chances pass them by.

Below we will identify eight problems which are seriously impeding the long-term future of the humanities in the Netherlands. Some of these problems have external causes, but others are mainly down to the humanities themselves.

This chapter is limited to an analysis of the problems. Chapter 3 will show how the problems identified can be dealt with by a joint effort of all the parties involved.

1 Shortfalls in the various funding streams

In recent years the Dutch government has invested heavily in academic research. Considerable extra funding has become available, for instance from the natural gas revenues (resources from the Economic Structure Enhancing Fund (FES)). However, the humanities have not benefited from these resources anywhere near as much as have other academic fields. This is shown quite clearly by research load data collected by the Dutch universities.

Figure 1b shows that over the past ten years the total research load has grown by 23%. Across the board there has also been growth in the humanities sector (which corresponds almost exactly to the HOOP (Higher Education and Research Plan) sector called ‘Language and Culture’ in the Tables), but to a much more modest degree, namely 7%. Moreover, if we then look at the development of the various funding streams, we see that this relatively modest growth is due entirely to indirect public funding, and that funding from this source has also been far below average. For the humanities, both direct public funding and contract funding have only decreased over the past ten years.

Total	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
L&C	1,181	1,166	1,188	1,137	1,125	1,099	1,200	1,283	1,294	1,269
Total	12,256	12,357	12,780	13,148	13,457	13,718	14,157	14,469	15,022	15,066
Total excl, L&C	11,075	11,191	11,592	12,011	12,332	12,619	12,957	13,185	13,728	13,797
Direct public funding										
L&C	853	833	869	810	824	772	813	882	849	819
Total	6,677	6,605	6,743	6,862	6,941	6,971	6,956	7,101	7,308	7,297
Total excl, L&C	5,823	5,772	5,875	6,052	6,117	6,199	6,144	6,219	6,459	6,478
Indirect public funding										
L&C	236	235	243	255	231	250	312	331	369	368
Total	2,213	2,328	2,555	2,781	2,951	3,243	3,474	3,560	3,844	3,796
Total excl, L&C	1,977	2,093	2,312	2,526	2,720	2,993	3,163	3,229	3,476	3,428
Contract funding										
L&C	91	98	76	72	70	77	76	70	76	81
Total	3,366	3,424	3,481	3,506	3,566	3,504	3,727	3,808	3,870	3,973
Total excl, L&C	3,275	3,326	3,405	3,434	3,495	3,428	3,651	3,737	3,794	3,891

source: VSNU/KUOZ

FIGUUR 1a – Development of research load in FTE of academic staff in the HOOP category Language and Culture (L&C) compared with the total sector

ASIDE

Investments in knowledge and innovation

Over the past few years (roughly 2003-2007) the Dutch government has invested a great deal in research and innovation. The AWT (2007a) recently calculated that these investments add up to EUR 2.5 billion. The Economic Structure Enhancing Fund (FES) in particular has made hefty sums available. The humanities have not been able to benefit from these investments at all, because the programmes have been exclusively focused on scientific, technological and medical research. For example, only projects relating to micro and nanotechnology, IT, genomics and life sciences, sustainable system

innovations and high-quality use of space could apply for the 2004 BSIK (Investments in Knowledge Infrastructure (Subsidies) Decree) incentive (EUR 800 million). While the 2005 and 2006 FES incentives (EUR 500 M and 300 M respectively) did not have predetermined investment frameworks with priorities for certain themes, requirements relating to volume and intensive collaboration with consortia in the business world meant that these programmes were not exactly enticing to the humanities either. The criteria of the Smart Mix (EUR 100 M) did take the possibility of a contribution from the humanities into account, but ultimately the jointly prepared proposal was not accepted.

Total	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
L&C	100%	99%	101%	96%	95%	93%	102%	109%	110%	107%
Total	100%	101%	104%	107%	110%	112%	116%	118%	123%	123%
Total excl. L&C	100%	101%	105%	108%	111%	114%	117%	119%	124%	125%
Direct public funding										
L&C	100%	98%	102%	95%	97%	90%	95%	103%	99%	96%
Total	100%	99%	101%	103%	104%	104%	104%	106%	109%	109%
Total excl. L&C	100%	99%	101%	104%	105%	106%	106%	107%	111%	111%
Indirect public funding										
L&C	100%	99%	103%	108%	98%	106%	132%	140%	156%	156%
Total	100%	105%	115%	126%	133%	147%	157%	161%	174%	172%
Total excl. L&C	100%	106%	117%	128%	138%	151%	160%	163%	176%	173%
Contract funding										
L&C	100%	108%	84%	79%	78%	84%	84%	78%	84%	89%
Total	100%	102%	103%	104%	106%	104%	111%	113%	115%	118%
Total excl. L&C	100%	102%	104%	105%	107%	105%	111%	114%	116%	119%

source: VSNU/KUOZ

FIGUR 1b – Indexed growth of research load since 1997 of the HOOP category Language and Culture compared with the total sector

Direct public funding (DPF)

Like all university domains, the humanities depend on direct public funding for a large part of the basic funding of their research and teaching. Over the past years a certain imbalance has arisen in the allocation of funding. While there has been a growth of 10% in direct public funding across the whole sector, in the humanities the research load paid by direct public funding has dropped by 4%. This certainly cannot be explained by under-performance in humanities research. Probably pressure on the research budgets of other academic domains is responsible for this imbalance in the internal distribution of basic funding in the universities.¹⁵ In practice, indirect funding and contract funding for research have to be

matched by direct university funding. Because in recent years considerable sums have been made available for research in science, technology and also medicine, resources are being drawn away from humanities research (and also from social sciences research). This loss is then not compensated by income from other funding streams.

Contract funding (CF)

In recent years contract funding has been an increasingly important factor in the Dutch academic world. Hefty sums are involved; sometimes academic areas such as agriculture, technology and health care depend on contract funding for up to 40% of their total research funding.

Funding stream	DPF		IPF		CF	
Science	1,387	41%	1,271	38%	701	21%
Technology	603	35%	510	29%	630	36%
Agriculture	297	39%	148	20%	308	41%
Health	1,958	43%	842	19%	1,726	38%
Behaviour and society	1,049	57%	460	25%	320	17%
Economics	636	75%	85	10%	132	15%
Law	487	75%	86	13%	73	11%
Language and Culture	819	65%	368	29%	81	6%

source: VSNU/KUOZ

FIGURE 2 – Distribution of research load in FTE of Academic Staff and percentages for the various funding streams by HOOP sector for 2006

This is not the case for the humanities. In spite of high expectations in some quarters, substantial contract funding for these disciplines has never been realised. This is closely connected with the nature of contract funding, which consists mainly of government resources from various departments, supplemented by a relatively limited amount in grants from special funds and commercial assignments. There is no tradition of commissioning research in fields relevant to the humanities. At present approximately 80 FTE of academic staff in the humanities are paid for by contract funding, and this is even a little lower than in the late 1990s (see Figure 1b). It is not realistic to assume that in the coming years contract funding for the humanities will increase substantially.

Indirect public funding (IPF)

For indirect public funding the humanities rely mainly on NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) budgets.¹⁶ The NWO's annual turnover in this area is about EUR 30 M, distributed across various support programmes (Innovative Research Incentive, Open Competition and theme programmes). As such this funding stream is certainly substantial for the humanities. Moreover, in recent years it has grown

considerably (by 56%), so that in 2006 just under 370 FTE of academic staff were funded from this source. In view of the fact that these resources are allocated by competition, it is particularly gratifying that the humanities have done so well in obtaining indirect public funding. It is the best proof that humanities research is fully up to standard both nationally and internationally. At the same time we must remember that this funding stream is the only supplementary source of any significance. Without the NWO the humanities would have practically no opportunities for development.

In view of the reduction in direct public funding and the extremely modest scale of contract funding, it is hardly surprising that the number of applications made by humanities researchers for the various NWO funding programmes has risen considerably in recent years. Researchers put a great deal of time and energy into writing research proposals which in many cases are judged by peers as being excellent, but the number of applications often far exceeds the available number of grants. The NWO itself is of the opinion that an acceptance rate of less than 30% is unacceptable. For the humanities this target is attained only with

	veni	vidi	vici	average
Humanities	23%	30%	19%	24%
Earth and life sciences	23%	19%	20%	21%
Chemistry	31%	30%	22%	28%
Mathematics	30%	26%	30%	29%
Social and behavioural sciences	17%	20%	11%	16%
Medicine	21%	25%	15%	20%
Physics	28%	30%	22%	27%
Technology	33%	25%	21%	26%
Total	23%	24%	18%	22%

source: NWO

FIGURE 3 – Acceptance rates for Innovative Research Incentive 2002-2006

respect to the VIDI (see Figure 3). The chances of having an application for any other form of support accepted are significantly lower.¹⁷

In addition to the Innovative Research Incentive programme,¹⁸ the Open Competition programme is another very important form of support for the humanities. In this programme individual research proposals submitted by researchers compete for funding. Because in the humanities individual research always plays an important role, this form of support is particularly significant. The number of applications submitted to this programme has also increased greatly in recent years and the NWO's acceptance rate target of 30% has never been attained (Figure 4).

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	average
applications	26	41	48	51	51	48	91	87	104	102	65
accepted	6	9	10	9	12	12	13	12	22	26	13
acceptance rate%	23%	22%	21%	18%	24%	25%	14%	14%	21%	25%	21%

source: NWO

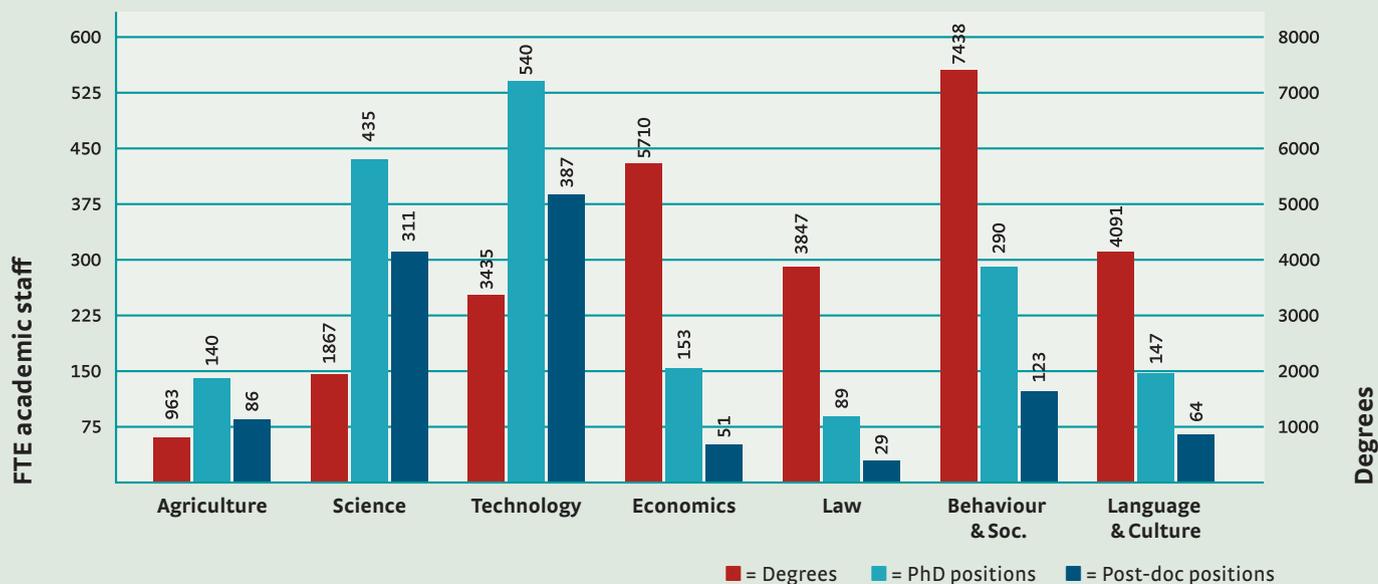
FIGURE 4 – Acceptance rates in Open Competition, Humanities 1998-2007

2 Ageing of academic staff and insufficient advancement opportunities for young talent

PhD and post-doc positions are hothouses for young talent, and their numbers are a good indicator of a Faculty's health. It is evident that humanities Faculties can only afford a very limited number of these hothouses. Figure 5 shows the number of graduates compared with new PhD and post-doc positions in 2007.

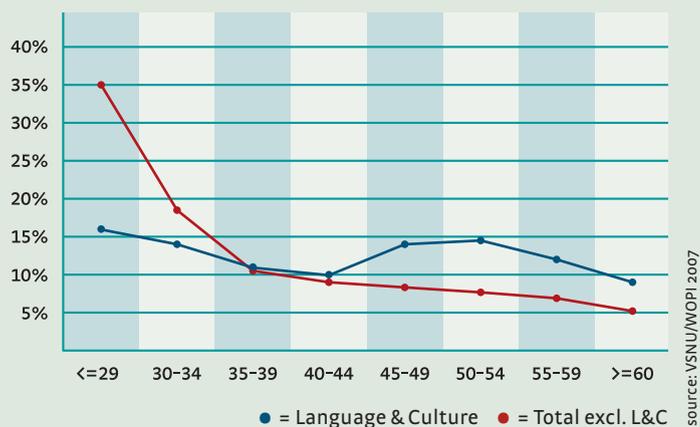
There is no lack of students who aspire to do PhDs: in the humanities over 4000 students obtain a Master's degree each year, and a large number of them are very talented and motivated students who have the explicit ambition of completing a PhD. However, the number of PhD positions is very limited. Annually there are approximately 147 new positions, the majority of which are paid for by indirect public funding (through the NWO's Innovative Research Incentive Scheme, Open Competition Programme and thematic programmes). Across the whole country Faculties can afford fewer than 50 humanities PhDs each year from direct public funding.¹⁹

In the humanities only 4 PhD positions are available per 100 graduates, whereas in the science and technology 23 and 16 positions are available respectively for every 100 graduates. Even if we take into account that in these disciplines many students – fortunately – have career wishes outside research, this is a gross disparity which is stifling the research ambitions of a young



source: VSNU/WOPI2006 and 2007, iCHO2007

FIGURE 5 – Numbers of new PhD and post-doc positions in each HOOP sector in 2007 compared with the number of degrees conferred that year



source: VSNU/WOPI 2007

FIGURE 6 – Considerably fewer younger people (under 35) and a relatively large number of older people are employed in the humanities

generation, with a downward spiral of negative consequences. The scarcity of PhD positions is a primary and significant indication that the humanities do not have sufficient financial resources to keep talented young graduates and offer them attractive career prospects.

Even after young researchers have completed PhDs there are practically no opportunities for them to continue their careers at the university. There are very few post-doc positions: approximately just over 60 new positions each year, and they are very temporary in nature. Most talented graduates are therefore forced to find jobs elsewhere in the labour market. Unlike in other academic areas, in the humanities there are virtually no career paths for researchers outside the universities. All in all, the present situation does anything but encourage young graduates to opt for an academic career in the humanities.

This problem of scarcity of starting positions for young talent is particularly acute because the humanities Faculties are now faced with a serious ageing problem

7a – Language & Culture

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of students	25.073	26.321	27.827	29.943	32.130	33.640	34.812	35.421
Permanent AS (FTE)	1.934	1.980	2.017	2.035	2.000	1.909	2.012	2.027
Staff/student ratio	1:31	1:32	1:33	1:35	1:38	1:42	1:41	1:42

7b – All HOOP sectors excluding Language & Culture

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of students	131.734	136.861	142.806	149.813	157.361	159.801	161.170	164.994
Permanent AS (FTE)	10.701	11.016	11.407	11.415	11.080	10.829	11.024	11.363
Staff/student ratio	1:32	1:33	1:33	1:35	1:37	1:39	1:38	1:38

FIGURE 7 – Development of student numbers compared with numbers of permanent academic staff (AS) excluding PhD students (in FTE).²⁰

among permanent academic staff (see Figure 6). If the gaps which arise due to large numbers of staff retiring in the near future are to be filled adequately, it is essential for Faculties to have more capacity to train and hold on to a larger number of the potential new generation of academics, and when they have demonstrated their worth to let them join the ranks of permanent staff, which are now rapidly ageing.

It is revealing in this context that for humanities Faculties it is financially unthinkable to introduce a tenure track system. This kind of system, which enables academic talent to proceed to higher academic positions on an ‘up or out’ basis, requires more financial elbow room than any humanities Faculty in the Netherlands has. Generally there are not even enough resources for a staff policy of appointing young talent to work under the wings of senior staff members, in anticipation of succeeding them later.

Another significant point is that these age ratios within the staff of humanities Faculties obviously have

an effect on the form and content of the courses that are offered to young adults in these Faculties.

3 Greatly increased teaching loads and pressure on research time

There has been outstanding interest in humanities degree programmes for many years. Over the past years the number of students enrolled in humanities programmes has risen by over 10,000 to 35,421 in 2007. However, due to the financial shortfalls the Faculties have not been able to invest in permanent academic staff. At present only 5% more staff have to cope with 40% more students! The consequence is a severely weakened student-staff ratio which has now reached 1:42 (see Figures 7a and b). But this average also conceals large discrepancies, because traditionally humanities Faculties have included many small programmes and a few large ones – a topic which will be discussed later. A trend like this must inevitably lead to undermining the quality of the programmes and/or eating into the staff’s research time.

4 Poor graduation rates, particularly in Bachelor's degree programmes

Humanities Faculties – like many other Faculties in the Netherlands for that matter – have to contend with low graduation rates. The figures shown below illustrate this:²¹

- Over 10% of humanities students drop out during the first year. This is more than in any other sector.
- In the Master's phase only 37% of humanities students obtain their degree within two years after the official duration of the programme.

Since the introduction of the Bachelor's/Master's system the situation has improved a little. After 4 years, 50% of the first cohorts of Bachelor's students had graduated. That this percentage is higher than the national average (40%) may have to do with the fact the humanities have relatively higher numbers of female, and in the Netherlands women have significantly higher graduation rates (55%) than men (38%).

A good analysis is needed of the causes of these low graduation rates. This analysis should take into account both the effort put in by the students and the structure of the humanities programmes. For example, are the courses too supply-driven and too little based on the needs of society and students? Are the same teaching materials and methods used for too long? Is there not a certain conservatism – partly due to ageing of the staff? Whatever the case may be – more attention must be paid to raising the graduation rates in humanities Faculties.

5 Fragmentary range of programmes, particularly Master's degree programmes

The humanities have always been a sector with a relatively large number of programmes of widely varying size; Indology has always attracted far fewer

students than History. (For an overview of the current Bachelor's programmes on offer and the average student intake see Appendix A.) When the Bachelor's/Master's system was introduced in 2003, the range of programmes within the humanities, which was already wide, more than doubled. Almost everywhere the doctoraal programmes were converted to three-year Bachelor's degree programmes and a one-year Master's degree programme. Because the one-year duration in this sector was laid down by law, the Faculties were forced to differentiate their Master's programmes into research Master's, educational Master's, practical Master's and dual Master's programmes. (The terminology reflects the convoluted nature of this setup). Together the humanities Faculties in the Netherlands are now responsible for about 150 unique Bachelor's degree programmes and over 250 Master's degree programmes.²² This is significantly more than in other sectors (see Figure 8).

While the reasons for this expansion of the range of programmes offered are understandable, it does lead to inefficiency, compartmentalisation and an

	BA	MA
Language and Culture	148	261
Science	68	108
Behaviour and Society	67	125
Technology	45	72
Economics	38	70
Law	33	63
Health	25	41
Agriculture	20	30
Education	-	123
Total	444	893

source: CROHO (Central Register of Higher Education Study Programmes), programmes on offer in July 2007

FIGURE 8 – Number of Bachelor's and Master's degree programme in each HOOP sector

uncomfortable abundance. The profusion of Master's programmes in particular is a problem. Students are spread across too many programmes, so that now – a few years after the introduction of the new system – many Master's programmes are non-cost-effective due to low intake numbers. This was foreseen before the Bachelor's/Master's system was introduced and in the framework of a national plan for the sector (*Sectorplan Levendige Letteren*) the Faculties of Arts attempted to achieve more efficiency in the Master's phase by collaborating with each other. However, this had only modest results.²³

The two-year Research Master's programmes which started with such enthusiasm (there are now 60 of these programmes in the humanities) also often suffer from low intake numbers.²⁴ This proliferation of programmes is now also causing problems for the staff, who have to divide their attention and energy across a steadily increasing number of programmes. The picture is even less attractive if seen in national terms; there is no question of a healthy balance between focus and mass. The national research schools, which could play a positive role in this situation, remain on the sidelines. Internationally this fragmented range of programmes also hampers the Dutch humanities: for example, no university offers an English-language Master's programme focusing on Dutch seventeenth-century painting, which would surely be a concept with good prospects.

6 Disadvantages of smallness of scale

Traditionally the humanities have included a variety of small-scale programmes. These programmes are small-scale by nature, because they require specific knowledge and the demand is limited. The problems of small arts departments were the focus of earlier reports submitted by committees chaired by Staal, Vonhoff and Gerritsen.²⁵ These problems are no less pressing today.

Administrators feel they have the cultural and social responsibility to maintain these small programmes, but it is difficult for them to value and protect their smallness of scale.

However, in many humanities Faculties there is smallness of scale and compartmentalisation which could well be avoided. In other words, it has not yet become customary enough to increase scale when it would be beneficial to do so, a practice which would do justice to the balance – so typical of the humanities – between disciplines that are small by nature and others that work better on a larger scale. On the one hand this is caused by a tendency to cling too much to traditional curricula, and on the other hand the status quo is kept in place by finely-meshed organisational structures and distribution mechanisms.

7 Insufficient use of social impact

The increased pressure on the humanities Faculties has led to them being left to their own devices. Faculties have their hands full with internal tasks and seldom get around to organising external activities and collaborative ventures inside or outside the university, while this is exactly where there is a world to win for the humanities. Although this is understandable in view of the pressure, it does lead to insufficient realisation of potential and social invisibility.

In the past there were close ties with secondary education, partly because the humanities – and particularly the Arts – were significant suppliers of secondary school teachers. In recent years this stream has dropped off considerably, so that there is no longer an intensive relationship between the humanities and secondary education. This alienation is regrettable for both parties. The quality of secondary education would benefit a great deal from closer ties with the university; and conversely, education should once again become a priority area

for the humanities. After all, it is there that interest is aroused and skills developed for the study of these disciplines and where their role in training people to become responsible world citizens begins.

Activities in the framework of lifelong learning (Higher Education for Seniors, etc.) should also be higher on the humanities' agenda. This is an area in which the Dutch education system is known to fall short,²⁶ while its importance is steadily growing. The humanities have a huge amount to offer in this respect, especially in view of their great appeal for people in later stages of their careers and lives. When Faculties do offer courses of this kind, they are always received with enthusiasm. However, there is no question of coordinated policy in this area.

In a more general sense many humanities scholars underestimate how much interest there is among the general public in their work. Some of the important functions of humanities scholars are to reflect on and shape public culture; to comment on manifestations of this culture; to provide erudition and philosophical depth; and to outline the historical backgrounds of current phenomena. This social function of the humanities is under considerable pressure at the moment, strangely enough mainly due to two internal causes. The first is the extreme specialisation of much humanities research, with increasing emphasis on the publication of articles for peers, preferably in top-ranking English-language journals, and relatively little appreciation of the public role of the humanities. The social impact of the humanities is also inhibited by the fact that humanities scholars have lost some of their certainties. In recent decades internal discussions of methods and cultural relativism have made humanities scholars wary of canonical approaches, quality judgments and grand narratives. However healthy self-criticism may be, it should not lead to the humanities failing to respond to a need which society evidently feels very keenly.

8 Inadequate tools for quality assessment and differentiation

In addition to peer review, international assessment of research increasingly makes use of bibliometric instruments such as citation indexes and impact factors. These are parameters which can be used in science, technology and medicine.²⁷ But it is now widely acknowledged – also internationally – that these instruments are not necessarily suitable for determining the quality of research in the humanities. For example, in 2000 the European Science Foundation (ESF) concluded that the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI) and the Science Citation Index of the ISI (Institute for Scientific Information, Philadelphia) should not be used by policy makers in Europe. For the humanities these indexes are notoriously unreliable because of the predominance of English-language literature – particularly literature published in the United States – and because of the fact that books are not included in them.²⁸ The European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH) which has since been developed under the auspices of the ESF has certainly not yet been operationalised to the point that it fills this gap.

The problem is not so much that proper quality determination is impossible in the humanities. What is missing is an effective instrument that can take the specific character of humanities research into account while measuring quality across an academic field. Because of the special character of these subjects, the benchmarks used to assess them must always be special as well. The fact that relatively few prizes are awarded in this domain aggravates this lack of indicators and makes it even more difficult for outsiders to judge the quality of research (and researchers) in the humanities. Much too often this causes serious problems for top-ranking scholars in the humanities.

ASIDE

Top-ranking history journals according to Thompson Reuters

The list shown below illustrates clearly that impact factors must be treated with the utmost caution when it comes to measuring the influence of journals in the humanities. According to Thompson Reuters, the most important supplier of citation information, these are the nine most influential history journals. This list, which is based on impact factors in 2007, consists exclusively of journals in English, most of which are published in the United States. The leading French journal *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, for example, is not included in these top nine, even though many historians still regard it as extremely influential.

- 1 American Historical Review
- 2 Environmental History
- 3 Journal of American History
- 4 Past and Present
- 5 Journal of African History
- 6 Journal of Modern History
- 7 Journal of Social History
- 8 Comparative Studies in Society and History
- 9 English Historical Review

(source: *Times Higher Education*, 14 August 2008)



**Professor of Greek Ineke Sluiter:
'Since I started university there have been nothing
but cuts in our field.'**

Gerard van Westerloo

There are two ways of approaching her subject, says Ineke Sluiter, Professor of Greek in Leiden: the way she started, and the additional way she learned in the United States. When she began her studies she was fascinated by what she refers to as 'the strange technical aspects of the subject'. What she liked doing most was reading ancient grammars, very technical works by writers describing their own Greek language. After graduating from the VU University in Amsterdam she went to the United States for a few years and there she became acquainted with a completely different research tradition which was much more focused on the contiguities

between major problems during classical antiquity and major problems today. 'My research,' she says, 'has clearly shifted in that direction.'

These are still the two approaches you can take to the subject of Ancient Greek. One takes a more museological view of the classics; the practitioners of this tradition prepare text editions, make texts available and provide commentaries on them. This is extremely important, according to Sluiter, because for everyone the point of departure is and remains the surviving texts. One might also wonder what good those texts are to us in the present era. In the United States the

work of Thucydides – at least, quotations from that work – played an important role in the debate about the Iraq war. In America classics scholars also quote Plato and Aristotle in courts to provide information in connection with cases involving – for example – homosexuality and pornography. Suddenly a classical quotation can be used as an argument in a modern debate about discrimination or freedom of speech. This attitude was a strong inspiration for her own approach to her subject.

Her own work contains references, for example, to the similarities between Achilles' hurt and embittered behaviour before the gates of Troy and the post-traumatic stress syndrome suffered by so many American Vietnam veterans – on the authority of the American psychiatrist Jonathan Shay. And in the Foundation Day speech 'Maken en breken' ('Make and break') she gave at Leiden University on 8 February 2005, she compared some incidents associated with the practitioners of new rituals in Greek and Roman history with a disproportionate reaction on the part of the government to the new threat of Islam in the Netherlands. Ineke Sluiter: 'These old texts refer to fire, the new religion is a disease, it is the plague, it must be exterminated, driven out, it's war. After the murder of Theo van Gogh all those terms also cropped up in the Dutch media. One minister spoke of war, and that means there is an "enemy" and that the use of force is legitimate. You can use an ancient debate to illustrate this without offending anyone, because after all, that was such a long time ago. But all the same, the similarities with modern times are suddenly very clear.'

She likes to examine the debates about norms and values in antiquity. 'I was doing that before Prime Minister Balkenende started,' she laughs. The big difference she

discovered is that Balkenende is very keen for values to be fixed and for everyone to agree on them – because then everything will be all right. But if you look at how people talked about these things in antiquity, you see a constant process of negotiation in which nothing is fixed at all.

Ineke Sluiter: 'My aim is to examine what role language plays in this context. For me it's not about learning lessons from history, that's impossible – the differences between society then and society now are too big. But we can recognise general processes and show that a certain way of speaking or writing has an escalating effect or calms things down.'

Ineke Sluiter says she is a humanities scholar, by conviction. When she herself, stimulated by inspiring teachers at her secondary school, started reading classics at the VU University Amsterdam, there were nine other students. The student-staff ratio was almost one to one. Now she welcomes thirty-five first-year students a year, which means that the Leiden classics department is the biggest in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, she says, since she started at university there have been nothing but cuts in her field. She and her colleagues still try to assist their students very personally. But at all universities where Ancient Greek is taught the permanent staff has been hugely reduced, so that the teaching load is much higher and there are far fewer prospects for young talent of getting permanent positions. 'It is becoming increasingly difficult,' she says, 'for Dutch classics scholars to hold their own internationally, but they are still managing to do so.'

To compensate, the universities have set up a joint central research school, OIKOS, of which Ineke Sluiter is the director. All trainee researchers complete part of their post-doc training there.

Ineke Sluiter: 'This actually works extremely well. But if you take a look at the organisational structure, you see that it's all volunteer work. OIKOS is an institution which is accredited by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, but that means no more than that we have a seal of approval. There is nothing attached to it – no resources, no post-doc positions, nothing. We have made a virtue of necessity. At present my field is doing very well, also in comparison with neighbouring countries. But we are working in conditions of deprivation. It is really a miracle that we are doing so well.'

She thinks that the main problem for humanities scholars is that on all sorts of fronts science criteria are being imposed upon them. In science you can in fact measure the impact of a field by citation lists and by counting publications in journals. But humanities scholars write books or chapters in books, and if you apply science criteria to these publications then it looks as though they are performing very poorly and they are shown in a bad light. Ineke Sluiter: 'I actually think we should not go along with those criteria. We should be saying, the humanities are training the most academics. What are they worth when they arrive and what are they worth when they leave? The difference is down to us – we have earned that for society. Now we often think, OK, let's make one of these citation lists. But that's not our way of writing. Now you see that many of our best classics scholars go abroad, where they can hold their own very well. They go to Chicago, to Yale, to all sorts of research institutes. But in the Netherlands? I have many students who would like a research career. Sometimes eighty applications are submitted to NWO for ten research positions, often for outstanding young people. The chance that they will not get that position is very high. Every year research proposals are laid aside which have

been classified as "very good" but nevertheless do not make it.' She does not want to complain about the amount of money her own department receives from indirect funding through the NWO. Over the past three years the classics department in Leiden has received over EUR 2 M from that source. This means, she says, that 'we are relatively successful'. An application for three young people in her department is now under consideration. But if there was something she could change personally from one day to the next, then this is what it would be: more research time and less teaching load for her permanent staff.

I return to the research specialisation she acquired in America and ask her if it is not in danger of being unhistorical when it makes connections between societies which are as hugely different as Greek society in the fifth century BC and modern society in the twentyfirst century AD. Ineke Sluiter answers that one of the objectives of her field is precisely to make people sensitive to what is their own and what is foreign. To be able to understand what happened there, we have to change all of our frameworks and points of reference. She takes the example of Thucydides, the great classical historian who wrote about the war between Sparta and Athens. His book includes speeches both by people in favour of the war and people against it. American neocons who want to defend the war in Iraq like to present a quotation from one of these speeches as though it were the opinion of Thucydides himself, while an opponent of the war may take a quotation from a different speech to condemn the war on equally spurious grounds. Ineke Sluiter: 'Thucydides himself actually presents an excellent analysis of the problem you have if you are a world power, as Athens was then, and shows that every world power is ensnared by that very power. My point is precisely that it is our task to

say, wait a minute, you have to read it in its context. And in that context, this is a better interpretation.'

With a great deal of satisfaction, she mentions a paper by one of her students, Arjen van Veelen, who wrote about Thucydides and the events at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. Thucydides himself wrote that when people are placed in extreme situations they exhibit extreme behaviour; it is therefore hardly surprising that the Americans indulged in actions like these. 'Then you are using the classical author Thucydides to say something about the human condition. I think that's interesting. And it's up to us classics

scholars to say – watch what you're doing. You can defend some things on the basis of a certain text, but not others, because then you are making improper use of a quotation.'

Finally, a sigh of relief. It's true. Those who want to become classics scholars have to throw themselves into an all-out race. Ineke Sluiter: 'There's nothing bad about that. The best students become your PhD students. The best PhD students get the research jobs. The rest opt quite deliberately for something else. But there are no unemployed classics graduates. There aren't any.'



III National Plan for the Future of the Humanities

In this chapter we will present – in accordance with our remit – a National Plan for the Future of the Humanities. The plan aims to ensure a sustainable new future for the humanities and to address the structural problems referred to in the previous chapter. For the sake of clarity we will repeat these eight problems below.

- 1 Shortfalls in the various funding streams
- 2 Ageing of academic staff and insufficient advancement opportunities for young talent
- 3 Greatly increased teaching loads and pressure on research time
- 4 Poor graduation rates, particularly in Bachelor's degree programmes
- 5 Fragmentary range of programmes, particularly Master's degree programmes
- 6 Disadvantages of smallness of scale
- 7 Insufficient use of social impact
- 8 Inadequate tools for quality assessment and differentiation

At first glance it might seem as though to a large extent these problems are independent of each other and could therefore only be tackled one by one. However, according to the committee's analysis the problems are largely due to the combination of a lack of clear-cut strategic choices in the sector itself on the one hand, and self-reinforcing financial shortfalls on the other. Moreover, some of the problems are undeniably interdependent, and are associated with vicious downward spirals. For instance, it is more than imaginable that there are connections between (2) and (4), between (3) and (7), etc. This blocks the path to innovation and makes it difficult for the humanities to move on to a new and vibrant future.

Outstanding individual exceptions may not conceal the fact that the system does not function as well as it might – in fact that it is even in danger of eventually breaking down altogether.

The committee therefore thought about how these problems could be addressed in an *integrated* way. We believe we have found an appropriate solution in two basic concepts:

- good coordination of direct and indirect public funding
- the point of leverage should be the level at which the problems come together most obviously and where the solution – that is, the structural improvements – should begin: the Faculties.

In the humanities, the Faculty is the level at which the structures of teaching, research and staff policy come together most obviously, and at which there should be sufficient administrative power, capacity and courage to tackle the problems. The committee is therefore in favour of an approach which focuses on the Faculties and challenges them, in conjunction with their Executive Boards, to develop sustainable vision statements for the future. If these vision statements are convincing, then additional funding should be provided.

The committee also thinks there should be a special role for the NWO in the plan. The NWO has a very special responsibility for the well-being of the humanities in the Netherlands, which probably goes beyond its responsibility for the other four major academic sectors because NWO is the humanities' *sole* mainstay. Finally, the committee would like to address the KNAW in particular with respect to problem 8.

1 Establishment of a Structural Enhancement Budget for the humanities sector

The committee advises the Minister of Education, Culture and Science to make substantial additional resources available to the humanities on a permanent basis. Initially these additional resources should be made available under certain conditions, so that in the coming seven years the main impediments to a sustainable future for the humanities can be overcome. The committee fully concurs with the report submitted by the Dynamisation Committee, which in 2006 advocated a national budget (of EUR 200 M) for the improvement of the humanities and social sciences sectors. In line with that recommendation, we propose the establishment of a budget which only humanities *Faculties* would be able to draw upon.²⁹ For this purpose Faculties (with the visible and explicit support of their Executive Boards) should draw up coherent plans in which – on the basis of convincing vision statements for the future and thorough analyses of their present positions – they demonstrate that they intend to address the problems referred to in the previous chapter. To be approved, a plan must therefore:

- contain a coherent view of what kind of faculty the Faculty in question wants to be, that is, what teaching and research profile it wants: broad or specialised, mainly post-graduate or mainly undergraduate, disciplinary or interdisciplinary, modern or more classical;
- be based on long-term prospects of a solid foundation of direct public funding from the Faculty's own university. This requires a clear statement of position on the part of the Executive Board with respect to the Faculty's ambitions and profile, and commensurate funding (problem 1). Transparency

is important here so that when the plans are evaluated it can be established that the resources have in fact benefited the humanities;

- promote a more balanced and more future-oriented staff composition and accommodate young academic talent in fixed ranks, for example by introducing a tenure track system, expanding the number of PhD and post-doc positions, and adopting an innovative staff policy, in which 'distribution of scarcity' is no longer the guiding principle (problem 2);
- make it clear how the present inadequacies in research (insufficient PhD positions, little research time for senior researchers) will be remedied (problems 2 and 3);
- address the fragmentation in the range of programmes offered, particularly at the Master's level, by means of inter-university coordination and collaboration (problem 5). In the case of the research Master's programmes it might be possible to collaborate through the national research schools or inter-faculty graduate schools. With respect to the problems of the small arts departments, it may be possible to achieve greater efficiency and higher quality through expansion of inter-university collaboration in the framework of the *Sectorplan Levendige Letteren*. The position of programmes offered at only one university should also be included in this sub-plan;
- eliminate organisational compartmentalisation in the Faculty (problem 6);
- include innovative teaching measures which will promote the graduation rates of humanities students, reduce dropout rates and increase advancement opportunities (problem 4)
- include proposals for intensifying the Faculty's social impact (teacher training programmes, art programmes, Higher Education for Seniors, etc.).

This will also require clearer appreciation in the Faculty's own policy for social services of this kind being provided by its staff (problem 7).

With the approach outlined above, the committee has deliberately chosen not to deliver a blueprint for the solutions to the problems in question, but to explicitly leave the initiative to the Faculties and their Executive Boards. Once again, the Faculty is clearly the level at which there should be sufficient administrative power, capacity and courage to tackle these problems. Rather than having the presumption to think it can provide ready-made solutions for all the Faculties, this committee prefers to initiate a *process* which will give the humanities Faculties an opportunity to migrate to a new and sustainable future.

In the committee's opinion only the humanities Faculties should be able to draw on this budget.³⁰ After all, they are the throbbing heart of humanities teaching and research in the Netherlands. Universities which do not yet have an integrated Faculty of humanities or cultural sciences – and the committee is strongly in favour of integrated Faculties – may submit joint plans on behalf of the separate Faculties involved.

Selection of the proposals and administration of the Structural Enhancement Budget

The committee proposes that the Structural Enhancement Budget be entrusted to a body which will be set up specifically for the purpose – the Humanities Incentives Board. This body will have ample authority

in the field of the humanities but also have enough distance to be able to form independent judgments. It might consist of a board of five individuals including three leading humanities scholars and two people from outside. This Board would assess the Faculties' plans on the basis of the indicative criteria outlined above and make decisions on the resources to be allocated to the Faculties. The Board might use external experts and advisors for this purpose and would also conduct site visits at the Faculties. The NWO should be in charge of organising budget management and providing the Board with the support it needs.³¹

Size and structure of the budget

The budget must be large enough to provide every Faculty which submits a convincing plan with adequate funding, related in size to the scale and nature of the Faculty in question. If this measure is really going to mean something to the sustainability of the humanities, the amounts of funding to be distributed through the budget will have to be substantial in size and systematic in character. We propose that the amount to be distributed through the budget should be increased over seven years from EUR 20 M to EUR 70 M. When the budget has been fully allocated, an amount of EUR 70 M per annum should be added to direct university funding. In other words – if the Faculty's plan proves to be successful, the university in question will receive the allocated budget in the form of increased direct government funding. Obviously this decision will have to be based on a thorough evaluation of the results achieved. We propose that the budget should be built up in the following way.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Structural enhancement budget	20	30	40	50	60	65	70	-	-
Direct funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	70

The size of the proposed budget will be accounted for in further detail in Appendix B.

2 Augmentation of Innovative Research Incentive and Open Competition

Our second proposal is addressed to the Governing Board of the NWO. It concerns augmentation of the Innovative Research Incentive programme and the Open Competition programme for the humanities. Expansion of both these programmes is urgently needed; indirect public funding is of crucial importance to the humanities in view of the shortfalls in direct public funding and the almost complete absence of contract funding (see problem 1). The committee proposes that in the internal distribution of resources the NWO should divide the budget in such a way that for both programmes an acceptance rate of at least 30% should be attained. It is important that this should take place in a transparent way so that it is possible to ascertain in retrospect that these resources have in fact benefited the humanities.

3 Adequate quality assessment and differentiation

The third feature of our plan for the future is the development of assessment tools which are geared to the humanities and criteria for quality differentiation (see problem 8). The committee proposes that the

KNAW and more specifically its Council for the Humanities should be specially commissioned to design, in consultation with the VSNU and the humanities Faculties, a quality assessment model for the Dutch humanities which is effective and as simple as possible (and which is in keeping with the guidelines set out in the 2005 KNAW report *Judging Research on its Merits*). Typical features of humanities research, such as the fact that books are the predominant form of publication and that English is not always the most appropriate language in which to publish, must be appreciated and taken into account in this model.

The committee also thinks that the KNAW should make a case for a wider range of *prizes* for the humanities. These are distinctly scarce in the Netherlands, and in fact inter-nationally as well, while in the academic world prizes can be an outstanding tool to create a positive and stimulating atmosphere and to showcase true excellence to the outside world. The Dutch humanities would benefit greatly from more positive stimuli and forms of distinction of this kind; we believe that the prize amount is less essential than recognition and careful selection. It is recommended that this should not be only at a national level; if possible the Netherlands should join neighbouring European countries in taking the initiative to set up one or more international awards for humanities scholars.

Recommendations for each party involved

The success of this plan depends to a high degree on the willingness of *all* parties involved to take responsibility for sustainable humanities and to put their money where their mouths are. Our committee has considered the roles of the government and the NWO (and KNAW) as well the Executive Boards of the universities, the Faculties and humanities scholars themselves. Below we will outline what we expect from each player in the field.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

- Invest substantial and systematic additional resources in the humanities through a specific Humanities Structural Enhancement Budget.
- Set up a Humanities Incentives Board to allocate this budget.

NWO

- Ensure that the internal division of resources takes place in such a way that in both the Innovative Research Incentive programme and the Open Competition programme an acceptance rate of 30% can be attained (in a way that can be verified in retrospect).
- Facilitate the organisation of the Humanities Incentives Board.

Executive Boards

- Formulate profiles and ambitions for the humanities at your university and ensure that adequate and transparent internal funding is provided for these Faculties on the basis of these choices.

Faculties

- Prepare an analysis of the state of affairs in your Faculty along the lines of this report, develop a master plan which meets the criteria outlined above and submit, in collaboration with the Executive Board, an application to the Incentives Board in charge of the Humanities Structural Enhancement Budget.

KNAW/Council for the Humanities

- Take the initiative in developing a system of quality benchmarks for the Dutch humanities which is clear, adequate and as simple as possible.
- Take the initiative in promoting a more positive climate within the humanities, for example by setting up new teaching and research awards for achievements in the humanities (possibly in an international context).

Humanities scholars themselves

- Do away with the tradition of internal fragmentation which has developed as a result of diversity and differences in structure and scale. It is demonstrably in the interests of the humanities to cooperate as much as possible in the implementation of this plan.



**History Professor Doeko Bosscher:
'A society which has no interest in what history
can teach it is not a resilient society.'**

Gerard van Westerloo

When Doeko Bosscher, 59 years old and Professor of Contemporary History in Groningen, entered university himself long ago, there were fourteen students in his year. This made his lecturers very nervous; they had never had such a huge number before. There were actually too many. What on earth was to become of them?

Now one hundred and fifty first-year students attend his lectures. In Groningen there have been as many as three hundred. Seventy per cent obtain degrees; and all those graduates find jobs without any trouble, though by no means all of them as historians. They are

employed by newspapers or in television, at a ministry or the provincial government, by international organisations, or they make documentaries. A few go on to academic careers.

For four years Doeko Bosscher was the Rector Magnificus in Groningen. In 2002 he decided not to continue as an administrator but to return to research. That is what makes him the happiest. He has never regretted it. 'At the moment,' he says, 'I am still relishing the memory of writing my contribution to four big books

on the history of Amsterdam, for which I wrote chapters on the post-war period. That took up a couple of years of my life. And it brought me back to my old position without any problems.’ Doeko Bosscher’s contribution consists of over two hundred pages of crystal-clear prose about practically all aspects of contemporary urban life, from the Provos via squatters’ riots and smoke bombs at the Queen’s coronation, to Mayor Job Cohen’s efforts to ‘keep things from getting out of hand’.

He says that he decided to study history because his post-war generation always lived in an atmosphere of concealed reality, of secrets hovering in the air like pollen. The secret of the war – the war their parents didn’t talk about. ‘My generation,’ he says, ‘always wanted to find out what that secret was.’ And then you discover as a historian how fascinating it is to realise while you are searching that the truth is not clear-cut, because there are several competing realities. Doeko Bosscher: ‘This morning I was at the Archives. Over and over again I find it such a sensation to turn the pages there. Every page discloses something, so that each time you think – aha! For me there is nothing better.’

For his PhD thesis on Colijn and the Anti-Revolutionary People’s Party – ‘as a Catholic by culture I knew nothing about the Reformed world’ – he spent a few years in an attic in The Hague, rummaging among mouse droppings through archive boxes he knew no-one had looked at for thirty years. A fellow historian once described opening an envelope at the National Archives which had been closed for three hundred years. It contained a lock of hair, a souvenir of a loved one. Doeko Bosscher: ‘At some point that envelope was sealed and ended up in a box, then that box was moved to an attic, then to an archive, and now he was lucky enough to be the first to open it. That sensation was very familiar to me. I have the best job in the world.’

I bring the conversation round to the humanities in general and this report on their future. Doeko Bosscher hopes that this is not yet another attempt to explain something he thinks has long since been explained. ‘It’s all very well,’ he says, ‘a report like this. But sometimes you get tired of this kind of thing. I think it’s a poor show when the public has to be reminded over and over again of our benefits and importance to society. It surprises me that the humanities have to prove time and again of what use they are.’

‘Of what use is your subject, history?’

First Doeko Bosscher goes to great lengths to praise today’s students, who he says are ‘very responsive’ and ‘motivated from the first year onwards’, and who have usually chosen his subject for the right reasons. ‘I have absolutely nothing to complain about as far as the students are concerned.’ In them he recognises his own motives for choosing history. In his debut novel *Strandvondst* he endows his protagonist with these motives: ‘Like a St George thirsty for information, he wanted to slay the dragon of mysteries.’ And now that he is a lecturer himself, he hopes to make his students ‘able to defend themselves against, shall I say, Fortuynesque circumstances, political movements like Trots op Nederland (‘Proud of the Netherlands’), in the hope that they can learn to look at them critically. They don’t have to reject everything, but they have to reflect on situations critically. A society which has no interest in what history can teach it is in my opinion not a resilient society.’

Every year he puts on a play with his students associated with some recent historical theme – for example the Aantjes affair or about Van Agt and Wiegel putting a government together. The students who are not actually involved in the performance do come to see it, because their exam includes a bonus question about the play. The students who do take part always

form close friendships and continue to see each other for years.

In this way his students learn while enjoying themselves that history is also a literary subject. Facts may dominate a historical story, but they do not monopolise it. There is always ample margin for freedom of interpretation. History is related to art. Ultimately historians are individuals; they are not keen on co-authors. It's about *their* language, *their* use of language, and *their* choice of language.

Doeko Bosscher: 'I feel embarrassed whenever someone says that science gets too much of the research funding. I want the greenhouse effect resolved too, I want the CO₂ from a new coal-fired power plant to be captured effectively too. But if you look at Dutch research policy in general, then it does focus very much on science. That counts internationally – and the standards imposed on us by the NWO are geared to that. More and more frequently the money goes to large-scale research projects with research leaders who say, OK, you do this, you do that and you do that. My older colleagues in particular are not so keen on working in groups like that.'

'Have you ever applied for funding for one of these large-scale research projects?'

Doeko Bosscher: 'No. For historians the success rate is 30 to 35%. With such a low success rate I am not going to bother applying for big projects. I already have my hands full with what I have to do before I reach 65.'

Occasionally, says Doeko Bosscher, the humanities can scrape up a little bit of the research funding – especially when a certain theme is suddenly the focus of attention, as the theme of social and cultural cohesion is now. How can we ensure that all those newcomers settle down well in the community? Should we do that in the American style? The Canadian style? Or should

we look for a typically Dutch style? This theme generates a large amount of research funding and the humanities can certainly contribute something as well. But apart from that he thinks that it should be automatically acknowledged that the humanities merit a special place of their own where they are safe and where they are not constantly hassled with the question 'where's your proof?'

Doeko Bosscher is realistic enough to admit that it is not necessary to be able to study every subject at every university. You used to be able to do Old French in several places, and you could do Modern Greek in Groningen and in Amsterdam. 'I think you have to be able to be sensible about these things within certain margins,' says the historian from Groningen. 'The people in Groningen just have to hop on the train to Amsterdam.' But there is, he says, a certain limit. For him, that limit is that there should be at least one department for every subject in Flanders and the Netherlands together. That can be in Ghent or Louvain, in Groningen or in Leiden, as long as there is at least one department left.

If you ask him straight out what the humanities' contribution to modern civilised society is, he says it is their capacity to 'put all the values that overzealous people are constantly defining as absolute into perspective. A good Arts Faculty can do that very effectively. It's a blessing for every university city to have a Faculty like that.'

'Finally, do you have one particular wish?'

Doeko Bosscher: 'Yes. In our education we could pay more attention to Dutch literature and in Dutch lessons more attention could be paid to history. I don't mean to brag, but I always have my students recite a few poems at my lectures. Bloem's poem about the liberation for instance, or Lucebert as an example

of the “modern poets”, or Schierbeek as an example of the Vijftigers.’

‘Or I tell them something about Anna Blaman and the reactions to her homosexuality to illustrate the

atmosphere of that time. That mixture of history and literature, I’m very keen on that. And they should do the same thing in the Dutch department as well.’



Conclusion: confidence based on the procedures followed

Like most committees, ours was set up in response to concern about perceived problems. However, in the course of our work we started to think increasingly in terms of opportunities rather than threats. In this report the main stumbling blocks impeding the progress of the humanities have been listed, documented and analysed, and directions in which solutions may be found have been proposed. The committee hopes and trusts that this report will help to create a breakthrough for sustainable humanities in the Netherlands. Our confidence that this will be the case is strengthened by the procedures on which the report is based.

At an early stage in its work the committee went to talk to people in the field. Contributions were invited on the website www.geesteswetenschappen.nl, and the number and depth of the contributions submitted was a pleasant surprise. Moreover, in November 2007 a public hearing was held at which all the important players were asked what services the committee could best provide, at the present time, for the humanities in the Netherlands. The response of Deans, Executive Boards, the NWO Humanities Board, the Literature Board of the KNAW, representatives of the research schools and a group of

opinion leaders was very constructive and greatly assisted the committee in forming its views.

When the committee had shaped its ideas (on both the analysis of problems and the suggestions for solutions) to a sufficient extent, a second public hearing was held in March 2008. The parties who had attended the first meeting were invited again, now to hear what the committee was thinking of proposing and to respond with their own views. At this second meeting the committee met with a great deal of positive response, while the exchange of opinions that followed helped to fine-tune the committee's point of view.

Because of this procedure, we can say with conviction that the present report is much more than just 'one committee's opinion'. The plan set out in this report is supported by the key players in and around the humanities, who are in favour of the course mapped out here and are prepared to contribute their share. Our impression is that our recommendations can be followed quickly. The result is indeed a National Plan for the Future of the Humanities, ready for implementation.

Notes

- 1 Derek Bok, *Commencement Speech 2007*. See www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2007/06.14/99-bok.html
- 2 For the composition of the committee see Appendix D.
- 3 Bijker & Peperkamp 2002, p. 21. Terms such as *geesteswetenschappen* (Dutch) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (German) can easily lead to misunderstandings, suggesting that the human mind itself is the research focus of the humanities, which is not the case. Disciplines such as psychology and pedagogy are categorised under the Behavioural and Social Sciences.
- 4 The University of Amsterdam, Utrecht University, Tilburg University and Leiden University have integrated Faculties of Humanities. Maastricht University and the Open University have Faculties of Cultural Studies. The VU University Amsterdam, the University of Groningen and Radboud University have separate Faculties of Arts, Theology and Philosophy. The Erasmus University Rotterdam has a Faculty of History and Arts and a Faculty of Philosophy. In most cases archaeology has been included in the humanities Faculties (except partly at the VU University Amsterdam); it is only in Leiden that it is a separate faculty. There are also several universities based on religious or ideological principles which can be regarded as humanities institutions. Humanities research is carried out at a number of research institutes, most of which are part of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- 5 See Appendix A for an overview of the Bachelor's degree programmes offered in the humanities sector and the average intake for these programmes. The staff and student figures referred to come from the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands) databases WOPI and 1cHO2007 respectively.
- 6 Communications, media and information studies programmes have suffered from this problem over the past years. See KNAW 2007, pp. 13-30.
- 7 Joscelyne & Lockwood 2003, p. 27. Governments, businesses and universities are working together in a programme called STEVIN (2004-2011), which has a total budget EUR 11.4 M to stimulate the language and speech technology sector in Flanders and the Netherlands (partly by funding strategic research) and aims to create an adequate digital language infrastructure for the Dutch language (such as digital databanks, corpora of written and spoken language, digital dictionaries and computational lexicons) so as to strengthen the position of Dutch in the modern world of information and communication. See <http://taaluniversum.org/taal/technologie/stevin>.
- 8 The impression that the position of humanities graduates in the labour market is inferior to that of new graduates of other disciplines is largely based on distortion. Sixty-six per cent of humanities graduates find a job within a month and only 10% remain unemployed longer than six months. However, comparatively speaking humanities graduates do take a little longer to find employment at an academic level. See ROA 2007, p. 30 and *Arbeidsmarktonderzoek Leiden* 2005.
- 9 See OCW & EZ 2005, 13; Raes & Hofstede 2005.
- 10 This information is based on *Arbeidsmarktonderzoek Leiden* 2005 and employment market data from the review committee reports about various humanities programmes published in recent years by QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities).
- 11 In 2008 audio book publishers Home Academy had a total of 67 lecture series in their list, including 43 which were humanities-related.
- 12 See Van den Broek, Huysmans & De Haan 2005 and Huysmans & De Haan 2007, and also AWT 2007.
- 13 With some caution it may be concluded that in recent academic reviews the humanities have performed better than other academic areas. Thirty-seven per cent of all degree programmes assessed up to the end of 2007 were humanities programmes. They were responsible for 64% of the programmes classified as 'good' or 'excellent'. Source: SKI-database 5.01, CHOICE (December 2007).
- 14 These figures are based on the lists of 'starting grants' published by the ERC in June 2008: 297 laureates, of whom 24 were from the Netherlands, of whom 5 were humanities researchers.
- 15 See AWT 2004.
- 16 Apart from the funding provided by the NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research), indirect public funding also includes funding supplied by the KNAW (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences). For the humanities these resources consist mainly (about EUR 25 M annually) of expenses for the humanities institutes (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies at Leiden, Meertens Institute, National Institute for War Documentation, etc.). Apart from

these, the KNAW is also in charge of a few smaller foundations and funds which finance awards, stipends and Chairs in the humanities. Annually these amount to a total of approximately EUR 441,000.

- 17 The report recently issued by the NWO evaluation committee also discusses the success rates of the various fields (humanities, science, social sciences). It implies that the acceptance rate for applications from the humanities is 39.4%. This figure gives a distorted impression, because it also includes percentages for smaller forms of funding – which are less focused on research – such as replacement grants, internationalisation grants and investments. The average success rate for the main forms of support from NWO Humanities (Innovation Research Incentive and Open Competition programmes) is 23%.
 - 18 VENI grants are intended to enable researchers who have just obtained their PhDs to develop their ideas for another three years; the maximum amount is EUR 250,000. VIDI grants are intended to enable researchers to develop innovative research lines of their own and to appoint one or more researchers; the maximum amount is EUR 800,000. VICI grants are for senior researchers to build up research groups of their own; the maximum amount is EUR 1,500,000 (these amounts are from 2009 onwards). Source: <http://www.nwo.nl>.
 - 19 The number of PhD positions with direct public funding was supplied in writing by the Deans. The number of PhD positions funded through the Innovative Research Incentive programme was supplied by NWO Humanities.
 - 20 This staff/student ratio was calculated on the basis of ratios of teaching time/research time/other presented by De Kok, De Jonge & Tom 2007.
 - 21 ResearchNed 2006. Bachelor's degree figures supplied by VSNU based on 1CHO2007.
 - 22 At present 148 unique Bachelor's degree programmes are offered in the HOOP sector Language and Culture under 70 different labels.
- The number of unique Master's degree programmes has risen to 261. This includes 60 Research Master's programmes which have been accredited by the NVAO (Netherlands Flemish Accreditation Organisation). Teacher training programmes and educational Master's in the humanities are not included. Source: CROHO (Central Register of Higher Education Study Programmes), programmes on offer in July 2007.
- 23 In 2003 the universities and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science agreed on a national plan for the humanities: *Sectorplan Levendige Letteren*. The plan included agreements about making the Bachelor's phase of traditional monodisciplinary language programmes broader, more flexible and more appealing, intensifying international collaboration, and coordinating a more efficient range of Master's programmes. It is this last item in particular that has produced only modest results because inter-university collaboration takes place only in a small number of disciplines and is limited to the universities in Leiden, Utrecht and Amsterdam (VU University Amsterdam and University of Amsterdam).
 - 24 NVAO 2007.
 - 25 Advisory Committee on Small Arts Departments 1991, Committee on the Future of the Humanities 1995, KNAW 2002.
 - 26 Cf. the recent OECD report (2007).
 - 27 Although there is a growing tendency in these fields too to put these instruments into perspective; see KNAW report 2008a.
 - 28 Peyraube 2002, pp. 13-15.
 - 29 Dynamisation Committee (2006), measures 2 and 3, pp. 12-13.
 - 30 I.e. the humanities Faculties of the UvA, VU, UU, LEI, RUG, RU, TU, EUR, UM and OU. The committee proposes that the universities based on religious or philosophical principles should be kept outside this plan because there are separate funding arrangements for these institutions.
 - 31 This is in keeping with the Chang report's recommendation that as much as possible measures should be channelled through existing institutions.

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Abbreviations

AHCI	Arts and Humanities Citation Index
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AWT	Adviesraad voor het Wetenschaps- en Technologiebeleid (Advisory Council for Science and Technology)
BSIK	Besluit Subsidies Investerings Kennisinfrastructuur (Policy Investments in Knowledge Infrastructure (Subsidies) Decree)
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation)
ERIH	European Reference Index for the Humanities
ESF	European Science Foundation
EUA	European University Association
EUR	Erasmus University Rotterdam
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council
HERA	Humanities in the European Research Area
ISI	Institute for Scientific Information, Philadelphia
KNAW	Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)
KUOZ	Kerngetallen Universitair Onderzoek (University Research Indicators)
NWO	Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research)
OU	Open University
RU	Radboud University Nijmegen
RUG	University of Groningen
LEI	Leiden University
UM	Maastricht University
UU	Utrecht University
UvA	University of Amsterdam
UvT	Tilburg University
VSNU	Vereniging van Nederlandse Universiteiten (Association of Universities in the Netherlands)
VU	VU University Amsterdam

Illustrations

- 2 Edwaert Collier, *A Vanitas still life* (1662), oil on canvas.
Private collection, on loan to Institute of Art, Minneapolis
- 6 China Central Television (CCTV), Beijing (2008).
Designed by Rem Koolhaas and Ole Scheeren (OMA).
Photo by Feng Li / Getty Images
- 8 Johannes Vermeer, *A Lady Writing* (c. 1665-66), oil on canvas.
The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
- 10 Public Library Amsterdam (2008). Photo by Michele Lugaresi
- 12 X-ray of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Belshazzar's Feast* (c. 1635), oil on canvas.
National Gallery, London
- 19 Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Photo by Aron Brand
- 20 José van Dijk. Photo by Ton Brouwers
- 24 St. Willibrord (c. 658–739), first Bishop of Utrecht.
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
- 36 Ineke Sluiter. Photo by Jenny van Bremen
- 40 Vincent Van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, (1889), oil on canvas.
Museum of Modern Art, New York / The Bridgeman Art Library
- 46 Doeko Bosscher. Photo by Pepijn van den Broeke
- 50 Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Mediapark, Hilversum (2008).
Designed by Willem-Jan Neutelings and Michiel Riedijk. Photo by Leuntje
- 58 Remains of a Roman ship uncovered at Nieuwe Markt in Woerden (2003).
Photo by Jean-Pierre Jans / Hollandse Hoogte



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Appendix A

Bachelor's degree programmes offered and intake figures 2005-2007

Average first-year student intake in Bachelor's programmes in HOOP sector Language and Culture 2005-2007

(Source: VSNU/1cHO2007)

Programme	UVA	UU	RUG	LEI	RU	VU	EUR	UvT	UM	Total
General Cultural Studies	68				55	22	90	22		257
American Studies			74							74
Arabic Language & Culture	33	36								68
Arabic, Persian and Turkish Languages & Cultures				39	20					59
Archaeology			31	93						124
Archaeology & Prehistory	26					20				46
Communication and Information Studies		137	124		170	56		88		575
Cultural Studies									134	134
Documentary Information Studies	18									18
German Language & Culture	18	18	19	16	20	6				97
Egyptian Language & Culture				12						12
English Language & Culture	77	116	74	119	111	46				544
European Studies	226									226
Finno-Ugric Languages & Cultures			8							8
French Language & Culture	42	49		39		11				141
Frisian Language & Culture			5							5
History	214	313	186	226	131	60	101			1232
Greek and Latin Language & Culture	17		14	33	18	12				94
Hebrew and Aramaic Languages & Cultures				4						4
Hebrew Language & Culture	8									8
International Organisations and International Relations			218							218
Islamic Theology				14						14
Italian Language & Culture	42	26		27						95
Celtic Languages & Culture		19								19

Average first-year student intake in Bachelor's programmes in HOOP sector Language and Culture 2005-2007

(Source: VSNU/1cHO2007)

Programme	UVA	UU	RUG	LEI	RU	VU	EUR	UvT	UM	Total
Arts, Culture & Media			132							132
Art History	130	89	46	100	31	33				428
Latin Language & Culture	6									6
Liberal Arts and Sciences (ROAC)		138								138
Liberal Arts and Sciences (UCU)		217								217
Comparative Literature	43	29		21		8				100
Media & Culture	293									293
Musicology	32	41								73
Dutch Studies				36						36
Dutch Language & Culture	131	113	48	61	49	21				422
Modern Greek Language & Culture	5									5
Ancient Cultures						17				17
Portuguese Language & Culture		8								8
Religion & World View						42				42
Religious Studies	27				56					83
Romanian Language & Culture	4									4
Romance Languages & Cultures			106		70					176
Russian Area Studies				17						17
Scandinavian Languages & Cultures	29		25							55
Slavic Languages & Cultures	36		11	7						54
Spanish Language & Culture	81	89								171
Language & Culture Studies		281			36					317
Linguistics	45	26	46	16	52	9				194
Languages & Cultures of Africa				10						10
Languages & Cultures of China				120						120
Languages & Cultures of the Middle East			18							18
Languages & Cultures of Indian America				1						1
Languages & Cultures of India & Tibet				10						10
Languages & Cultures of Indonesia				8						8
Languages & Cultures of Japan				112						112

Average first-year student intake in Bachelor's programmes in HOOP sector Language and Culture 2005-2007

(Source: VSNU/1cHO2007)

Programme	UVA	UU	RUG	LEI	RU	VU	EUR	UvT	UM	Total
Languages & Cultures of Korea				8						8
Languages & Cultures of Latin America				54						54
Languages & Cultures of Mesopotamia & Anatolia				3						3
Theatre, Film & Television Studies		179								179
Theatre Studies	57									57
Theology		81	25	16	8	36		42		209
Comparative Linguistics (Indo-European)				8						8
World Religions				23						23
Religion & World View Studies			20							20
Philosophy	157	113	62	68	66	45	75	33		619
Philosophy in a specific discipline			37	7			38			83
Total										8666

Appendix B

Justification of the proposed budget

The committee considers that ultimately an annual sum of EUR 70 M will be needed to achieve the desired structural enhancement of the humanities Faculties. In its approach to this sum the committee takes two paths. The first is oriented towards addressing the imbalance which has arisen in the academic staff composition in the humanities, and the second towards addressing the lopsided student/staff ratio. There are problems associated with both paths, but in the committee's opinion a combination of the two constitutes a good approach to the initial needs of this sector.

1 Addressing the staff structure

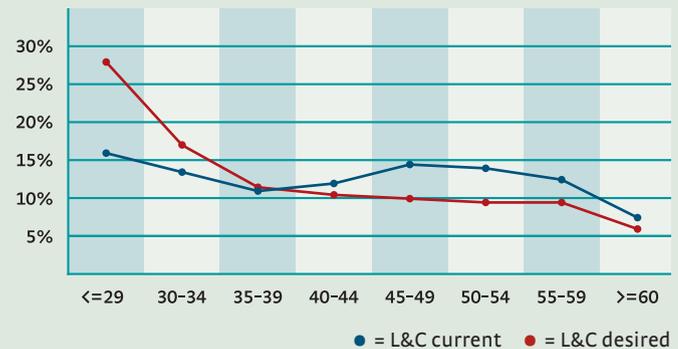
Chapter 2 showed that the age distribution of academic staff in the humanities is very different from that in other academic fields and in many ways features an unhealthy dip in the younger age brackets. Figure 6 shows this anomalous composition. The committee has calculated how many FTE of academic staff would be needed to arrive at a more normal age distribution, in other words:

- with significantly more young researchers (trainee researchers and post-docs)
- without the dip in the 35-39 age bracket
- and with a continuously descending line, so that there is enough space for departures and/or selection of staff.

To arrive at a more normal age distribution, as shown in the Figure below, a total of an additional 650 FTE is required, to be divided as follows:

- 350 fte in the <=29 age bracket (PhD students)
- 150 fte in the 30-34 age bracket (post-docs)
- 100 fte in the 35-39 age bracket (ud [Associate Professor] / uhd [Senior Associate Professor])
- 50 fte in the 40-44 age bracket (ud / uhd)

Based on a total cost price per FTE of academic staff of EUR 130,000 per annum (source: VSNU) the amount required will be: EUR 84.5 M per annum.



Desired age distribution of Language & Culture staff plotted against existing distribution (2006)

2 Addressing the staff/student ratio

Another way of approaching the proposed budget is as follows. The number of academic staff working in the humanities in both teaching and research (excluding PhD students) is about 2000 FTE. They serve a total of over 35,000 enrolled students. Based on a ratio of teaching, research and other time of 45% : 42% : 14%, this results in a staff-student ratio of 1:42.^I To reduce this ratio to 1:33 – for example – about 500 FTE of additional academic staff would be required. Based on a total cost price per FTE of academic staff of EUR 130,000 per annum, the amount required would be EUR 65 M.^{II}

3 Conclusion

An additional sum of EUR 70 M per annum for structural enhancement of the humanities is a substantial sum for this sector, but it is certainly not disproportionate considering that in 2006 the Dynamisation Committee estimated that EUR 200 M per annum in additional funding was needed to strengthen the humanities and social sciences sectors *together*.

Our committee advocates a gradual increase in the budget over seven years, so that in the initial years the maximum amount of EUR 70 M will not yet be required. In principle, after the budget has been exhausted the resources allocated by the Humanities Incentives Board are to be added to the direct government funding of the universities in question. But before that takes place the Humanities Incentives Board should conduct a thorough evaluation of the *effects* produced by the Faculties' structure plans.

^I These ratios come from a recent time-budget survey conducted by EIM/OCW. See OCW 2007.

^{II} The committee also attempted to calculate the sector's needs on the basis of humanities Faculties' existing budgets. The university's annual reports were only of limited assistance for this purpose, and this exercise has therefore not been reproduced here. However, it did lead to the conclusion that a sum of EUR 70 M is roughly proportionate if 10 Faculties with 250 FTE of staff and an *average* annual budget of around EUR 30 M are to be raised to a higher level on a permanent basis.

Appendix C

The international perspective

In accordance with its remit, the committee also formed an impression of the humanities from an international perspective. It was able to do this on the basis of a surprisingly wide range of recent recommendations and reports about the humanities in various countries, which shows that the position of the humanities is an area of concern in many other countries, and that initiatives to strengthen that position have also been taken elsewhere.

Ireland

Recently a report was issued by the Royal Irish Academy about the position of the humanities in Ireland. This report concludes that the fundamental importance of these disciplines for the development of the knowledge economy is insufficiently recognised,ⁱⁱⁱ partly as a result of a lack of resources, but also due to the strong emphasis in educational policy on more tangible returns of innovation. According to the report, this is wrong. 'Innovation is a broad church. To this extent, the humanities and social sciences should not be viewed as supplementary to science policy, or presented as an afterthought to it. They are integral to the development of our culture, economy and society as a whole.' At the request of the Minister of Education and Science a 'foresight exercise' has now been initiated to strengthen the capacity of this sector, particularly its financial capacity.^{iv}

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom discussions about the position of the humanities have recently led to the establishment of a special Funding Council for these disciplines (comparable with a separate NWO for the humanities). The ideas for this date from as far back as 1997, when the well-known 'Dearing Reports' drew attention to the anomaly that all disciplines except the arts and humanities had their own funding councils and that therefore these disciplines were almost completely dependent for their research on direct government funding through the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC).^v This situation was only very recently (in 2005) redressed through the foundation of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The AHRC provides funding through open competition for postgraduate research and research by senior researchers associated with universities and a few other institutes. In addition to the humanities, the AHRC also covers the arts, including the performing arts and design. Collaboration in wider research programmes and inter-disciplinary research are important criteria for funding. Apart from providing a firmer financial basis, another important objective of the AHRC is to make these disciplines more visible to the public.^{vi}

This debate about the great contributions of the humanities to the well-being and also the prosperity of society is conducted with remarkable self-confidence

iii Royal Irish Academy (2007), *Advancing Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Ireland, Report by the Royal Irish Academy* (February 2007).

iv This study will be coordinated by the Higher Education Authority. For the terms of reference see www.heai.ie/webfm_send/1806.

v Reports of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education ('The Dearing Report') (July 1997). The recommendations for the establishment of a separate funding council for the humanities are to be found in Appendix 3 of that report. See www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe

vi British Academy (2004), *'That full complement of riches': the contributions of the arts, humanities and social sciences to the nation's wealth*, London.

in the United Kingdom, as evidenced for example by the report issued by the Royal Society entitled 'That full complement of riches' (2004).

Germany

In Germany too there has been a searching policy debate about the humanities in recent years. The German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft = DFG) – the German equivalent of the NWO – has played a major role in this debate with its *Förderinitiative Geisteswissenschaften* (Funding Initiative for the Humanities) (2002-2007).^{vii} This initiative was prompted by the realisation that as the main external research funding body and for the humanities the *only* external research funding body, the DFG had a special responsibility for this field – a responsibility which had become even greater since German universities had to an increasing extent taken to basing internal distribution models on the success of research projects in obtaining indirect government funding and contract funding.

In the framework of the *Förderinitiative*, between 2002 and 2007 a series of funding programmes specially tailored to the character of humanities research was developed: more project-based support for individual researchers, grants to enable 'small subjects' to build up international networks and grants for long-term humanities research projects such as excavations and preparing text editions. A recent evaluation^{viii} shows that these instruments have been successful, but this does not mean

that the humanities are prospering in Germany. 'Funding cuts, thinking in terms of utilisation and the trend towards large-scale collaborative projects are putting the humanities under even more pressure,' says Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Chair of the Advisory Council for the DFG's Funding Initiative for the Humanities.^{ix}

Switzerland

Discussions about the position of the humanities in Switzerland started in 1990 and came to a climax in the work of a group set up by the Swiss government to promote the humanities and social sciences: *Arbeitsgruppe Förderung der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften*^x (2002). Long-term underfunding had severely undermined the quality of teaching and research in various disciplines. The group advocated (1) a considerable reduction of the staff-student ratio by the appointment of 483 new lecturers, (2) improvement of career opportunities for the younger generation (PhD students and young researchers) (3) raising the national research budgets for the humanities and social sciences and (4) intensifying the dialogue between these disciplines and the general public, among other things by embedding the humanities more deeply in teacher training programmes.

So far only a few of these recommendations have been followed, so that in a recent publication the Swiss Council for Science and Technology concluded that there is a 'bottleneck': much discussion about diagnoses and possible treatment, but still too little action.^{xi}

vii See www.dfg.de/forschungsfoerderung/foerderinitiativen_projektgruppen/foerderinitiativen/geisteswissenschaften/index.html

viii Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), *Förderinitiative Geisteswissenschaften 2002-2007. Abschlussbericht* (Bonn-Bad Godeberg, November 2007). See also the report issued by the Wissenschaftsrat (German Council of Science and Humanities) (2006), *Empfehlungen zur Entwicklung und Förderung der Geisteswissenschaften in Deutschland*, Berlin.

ix See www.scienceguide.nl/article.asp?articleid=105187

x Bundesamt für Bildung und Wissenschaft, *Förderung der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften* (2002), *Schlussbericht der von der Gruppe Wissenschaft und Forschung eingesetzten Arbeitsgruppe*, Bern.

xi Schweizerischer Wissenschafts- und Technologierat (SWTR), *Perspektiven für die Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften in der Schweiz. Lehre, Forschung, Nachwuchs* (SWTR Schrift 3/2006), p. 25.

Appendix D

Composition of the Committee

The Committee on the National Plan for the Future of the Humanities was established on 1 September 2007 by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. The composition of the committee is as follows:

Chair

Job Cohen

Job Cohen (1947) studied public law at the University of Groningen, graduating in 1971. In 1981 he obtained a PhD at Leiden University with a thesis titled 'Studierechten in het wetenschappelijk onderwijs'. From 1971 to 1981 he worked as an academic staff member at the Educational Research Centre at Leiden University, and from 1993 onwards as a senior academic staff member, professor and Rector Magnificus at the University of Limburg. From 1993 to 1994 he was State Secretary for Education and Science. He then returned to Maastricht University and was Rector Magnificus again from 1995 to 1998. After being deputy director of the broadcasting company VPRO for a short time, he was State Secretary for Justice from 1998 to 2001. He held various administrative positions within the Partij van de Arbeid (Dutch Labour Party) and elsewhere. He has also been a member of the Education Council, of the Supervisory Councils of TNO and of Felix Meritis, of the VPRO Board, and of the Board of the Jan van Eyck Academy. From 1995 to 1998 Job Cohen was a member of the Dutch Parliament's Upper House, the last two years as Party Chair. On 17 January 2001 he was inaugurated as Mayor of Amsterdam.

Members

Annemarie Bos

Annemarie Bos (1957) has been director of the humanities sector at NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) since 2002. She is also the initiator and coordinator of the network Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA), a network of 16 national research councils in the humanities, and the European Science Foundation's Standing Committee for the Humanities. She is a member of the Advisory Group for the theme Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities of the 7th Research Framework Programme, and of the Knowledge Transfer and Evaluation Committee of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in the UK. She studied economic and social history at Leiden University.

Godelieve Laureys

Godelieve Laureys (1949) is Professor of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Ghent. From 1983 to 1992 she was Professor of Scandinavian Language and Literature at the University of Groningen. Her main research areas are Scandinavian linguistics and contrastive lexicology. She is editor-in-chief of the Dutch-Swedish/Swedish-Dutch dictionary (Van Dale) and the Dutch-Danish dictionary (*Groot Nederlands-Deense woordenboek*), (Spectrum). Throughout her career she has held various policy-related positions in the Netherlands and elsewhere. In 1997 she was Chair of the Faculty-wide Arts Review Committee in the Netherlands. She was also a member of the Vonhoff Committee for the Future of

the Humanities in 1994/95 and is still a member today of the KNAW's Committee for the Assessment of Research Master's Programmes in the Humanities. From 1998 to 2002 she was a member of the Humanities Assessment Committee of the Research Fund of the National Bank of Sweden. She has also been a member of review committees in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Estonia. Since 2004 she has been a member of the Executive Board of the University of Ghent. She is also a member of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium.

Sijbolt Noorda

Sijbolt Noorda (1945) is Chair of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) and is the Dutch representative in the European Universities Association (EUA). He is also Chair of the Board of the Holland Festival and of the Supervisory Council of the Dutch Film Museum. From 1990 to 2006 he was Deputy Chair and Chair of the Executive Board of the University of Amsterdam. During that same period he was also Chair of the Supervisory Committee of the new Bible translation for the Netherlands and Flanders.

Frits van Oostrom

Frits van Oostrom (1953) is a university research professor in Utrecht. From 2005 until 2008 he has also been President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Science (KNAW). He has specialised in Dutch literature of the Middle Ages, and writes books on this subject which have an academic objective but are also

aimed at a wider audience. In 1995 he received the Spinoza Prize for his work; in 1996 his book *Maerlants wereld* was awarded the AKO prize for literature. In February 2006 his new book appeared: *Stemmen op schrift. De Nederlandse literatuur vanaf het begin tot 1300*. This is the first volume of a comprehensive new history of Dutch literature written by nine experts. Van Oostrom was also Chair of the Committee which drafted the Canon of Dutch History between 2005 and 2007.

Paul Schnabel

Paul Schnabel (1948), sociologist, is the director of the Social and Cultural Planning Office and a university research professor at Utrecht University, where he is also a member of the Board of the History and Culture Research Institute and of the Descartes Centre. He is also Chair of the Supervisory Council of the Netherlands Institute for Art History, a member of the Board of the Van Gogh Museum, adviser to the Rembrandt Association, Chair of the Academy De Gouden Ganzenveer and a jury member for the Prize for the Humanities awarded by the Prins Bernhard Cultuur Fonds. He was a member of the 'Profiles Committees' which advised the Minister of Education, Culture and Science on the future of the second stage of HAVO (senior general secondary education) and VWO (pre-university education). He writes as a columnist for the newspapers *NRC Handelsblad* and *Financieele Dagblad*. In 2006 and 2007 the newspaper *De Volkskrant* included him in a list of the ten most influential Dutch people.

Secretariat

Hans de Jonge

Since the beginning of 2007 Hans de Jonge (1975) has been an education policy adviser with the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU). Before that, among other things he worked as an educational policy assistant at the Faculty of Arts at Leiden University. De Jonge was trained as a historian.

Hubert Slings

Hubert Slings (1967) is involved in education policy advice, literature teaching methods and cultural education. He was secretary of the Development Committee for the Canon of Dutch History and has been the director of *entoen.nu*, the foundation which arose from this committee, since 2007. He also works at Anno, a promotional agency for the study of history in The Hague, and is editor-in-chief of *www.literatuurgeschiedenis.nl*, *www.bijbelencultuur.nl*, *www.entoen.nu* and the school editions series 'Tekst in Context'. From 2001 to 2007 he worked as an educational policy assistant at the Faculty of Arts at Leiden University. In 2000 he obtained a PhD with a thesis entitled *Toekomst voor de Middeleeuwen. Middelnederlandse literatuur in het voortgezet onderwijs* (Future for the Middle Ages: Middle Dutch Literature in Secondary Education).

Observer on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Liefke Reitsma

Liefke Reitsma (1977) works as a policy assistant at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's Department of Research and Science Policy. Within the Academic Fields sub-department she works on various projects relating to the humanities. Her own background is in the humanities: she studied Dutch language and literature and Frisian language and literature at the University of Groningen. After graduating she conducted PhD research into changes in Frisian verb clusters resulting from the influence of Dutch. At present she is continuing to write her PhD thesis as well as working at the Ministry.

The present strong position of the humanities in the Netherlands is under pressure. There are structural problems which are connected with financial shortfalls and a lack of clear-cut strategic choices. This report outlines the prerequisites for sustainable development of the humanities, describing the value and position of the humanities in the Netherlands in an international perspective, including recommendations for all parties involved.



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Front – Willem Roelofs, *The Rainbow* (1875)