

Visions of Humanity (Culture and International History, VI)

Veranstalter: Jessica Gienow-Hecht / Sebastian Jobs / Sönke Kunkel, John-F.-Kennedy-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin

Datum, Ort: 06.05.2019–08.05.2019, Berlin

Bericht von: Sönke Kunkel / Jessica Gienow-Hecht / Sebastian Jobs, Freie Universität Berlin

Marking the 20th anniversary of the symposium cycle *Culture and International History*, the 2019 conference addressed the growing interest in historical ideas and actions invoking transnational, international and global audiences in the name of common values, rights and concerns. International history is full of people and organizations that formulated visions of humanity in an effort to create common notions of identity („we“). However, who constituted „we“? Who was part of humanity, who wasn't? And how did those mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion become manifest in activism relating to human rights, humanitarian action, cultural output, international protest, and attempts to define „humanity“ in academic disciplines? These were some of the questions and perspectives discussed over three days packed with presentations and panels, opening a stimulating range of new perspectives on international ideas and practices of humanity since the early modern era.

The first panel focused on conceptual issues and drew on philosophical discourses. BENJAMIN WILCK (Berlin) talked about the definition of the human put forward by ancient Greek philosophers, who placed the human in a descriptive system of living beings. CHRISTOS MARNEROS (Kent) explored Gilles Deleuze's thinking, encouraging scholars not to speak of „being human“, but of „becoming human“ which involves accepting the malleability, irrationality and internal differentiation of humans. The third speaker, SUZY KILLMISTER (Melbourne), accepted the heritage of Enlightenment discourse and its political consequences of human rights, and attempted to think of modes to extend these rights and accommodate them to shifting cultural norms.

In Panel 2, ADAM HJORTHÉN (Berlin) talked about ways in which the New Sweden colony (1638-1655) has been remembered in U.S.-Swedish relations as a benevolent, humanitarian form of colonialism that embodied values of religious freedom, racial tolerance, and democratic ideals. CATHERINE ARNOLD (Memphis) studied the British engagement in French Huguenot prisoners and galley slaves from 1698 to 1715, showing how the British government's argument for intervention in France transitioned from one of confessional principles to one influenced by humanitarian ideas. BARBARA LAMBAUER (Paris) discussed the Jewish refugee crisis in Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914. Lambauer showed how the societies sought to aid refugees by encouraging education and vocational training to facilitate their transatlantic migration.

Panel 3 focused on connections between empire and humanity around 1900. Examining U.S. debates in the context of the Spanish-American war of 1898 with a particular eye on the plight of women and children, JESSICA GIENOW-HECHT (Berlin) argued that projections of gender contributed significantly to a shift from civilizational discourses to a more inclusive, universal concept of humanity. SÖNKE KUNKEL (Berlin) explored the material history of humanitarian aid in the context of the earthquake of Messina in 1908. Focusing on the concrete material objects moved across Alps and Atlantic by Europeans and Americans, Kunkel showed that relief for Italy served particularly purposes of national self-representation and cultural diplomacy.

The speakers of panel 4 emphasized the connection between humanitarianism and internationalism in the interwar period. ILARIA SCAGLIA (Birmingham) focused on the sanatorium in Leysin (Geneva) as a microcosm of emotionally charged international exchanges. BENJAMIN MARTIN (Uppsala) explored the role of bilateral cultural treaties and the lasting impact they had on cultural diplomacy. ANDREW JOHNSTON (Ottawa) added a decidedly gender-oriented perspective by bringing in an analysis of the Women's League. All three speakers engaged two main themes or questions that invite further explo-

ration: First, what is the role of bodies and physical experiences for the formation for international negotiations? Second, how did individual actors constantly establish and renegotiate regulations and rules of conduct on the international stage?

The first day concluded with a keynote speech by SIEP STUURMAN (Utrecht). Focusing on Enlightenment thinking, he explored how philosophers and thinkers began to chart out the category of equality as a new normative signifier underpinning human relationships. While notions of common humanity remained abstractions that were filled with different meanings, Stuurman argued, Enlightenment thinking now began to problematize inequality and gave equality a new benefit of doubt, therewith laying the groundwork for more contemporary notions of human rights.

In Panel 5 on art and museums, IAN SHIN (Ann Arbor) investigated American attempts during the 1910s to preserve Chinese art and antiquities under the pretext of protecting monuments of human civilization made in China. YANQIU ZHENG (Dallas, PA) focused on early efforts at cultural diplomacy by the ruling Nationalist Party to present Chinese art at world's fairs and other exhibitions in Europe and the U.S. in the 1930s. KAZUSHI MINAMI (Austin) analyzed the mutual impact and mutual misreading of „culture“ that arose around three U.S.-China art exchanges from 1971 to 1989. The panel showed how the representation of art intensified debates over cultural or even „civilizational“ differences and questioned definitions of the „universal“ that often rely on canons established in Europe.

Panel 6 addressed notions of humanity in times of war. Discussing ideas and practices of U.S. child evacuation in the 1930s and 1930s, CATHERINE RYMPH (Columbia) explored various cultural and structural impediments to child evacuation, showing that the U.S. Congress was reluctant to modify legal provisions for refugee aid and ultimately forestalled implementation of an effective child evacuation scheme. LINH VU (Tempe) compared practices of dealing with war dead in the context of World War II's Indo-Chinese-Burma Theater, contrasting American and

British approaches to transfer bones and bodies back to the United States and Britain with Chinese efforts to relocate the souls of fallen soldiers.

Panel 7 included three papers by MICHAEL KRENN (Boone), ANDREW BELL (Boston), and SARAH EPPING (Berlin). One common theme of those papers was an interest in the material nature of humanity in the context of archeological explorations, including Samuel George Morton's research on cranial capacity (Krenn), archeological research on the Maya (Bell) and U.S. non-governmental actors' interest in Mesopotamia (Epping). Probing into the relationships between U.S. visions of a common humanity and Pan American ancestry, all three speakers drew attention to the extent by which ideas and justifications of U.S. American territorial expansion shaped such explorations, notably the idea of „evidence“ for racial stereotypes and images of the Caucasian race as superior to all others.

In Panel 8, „Humanity and Visual Media“, VALÉRIE GORIN (Geneva) focused on the cases of two children, Kim Phuc and Alan Kurdi, and addressed the visual and affective politics of photographs showing children suffering, dying, or dead in wartime and international crises. SUZANNE LANGLOIS (York) dealt with educational filmstrips, produced by the United Nations, that in the immediate postwar years tried to represent the abstract idea of human rights in non-verbal ways. The discussion centered on questions of racial representation, highlighting an „in-built paternalism“ in humanitarian visual culture, and raised the question of how to represent race and its continued agency in a politico-philosophical context that aims at overcoming racial discrimination and rendering race invisible.

Panel 9 addressed the relationship between humanity and religion after 1945. Contributions included presentations on the human rights engagement of the World Council of Churches from the 1940s to the 1970s (BAS-TIAAN BOUWMAN, London), Catholic Internationalism and Christian visions of humanity (DAVID BRYDAN, London) and liberation theology and revolutionary justice in Guatemala in the 1960s (BETSY KONEFAL,

Williamsburg). All three talks and the ensuing discussions highlighted the specifics of religious rights, the multifarious appropriations of humanitarian visions by clerics and laymen as well as the relationship between Christian universalism and exclusionary discourses and practices.

Panel 10, „Humanity on Stage“, included four papers on music and dance. STÉPHANIE GONÇALVES (Brussels) dealt with Maurice Béjart's version of Beethoven's Ninth, while IGOR CONTRERAS ZUBILAGA (Huddersfield) explored the role of one particular song in the context of campaigns against capital punishment in late-Francoist Spain. Presentations by ANAIS FLÉCHET (Versailles) and PANAGIOTA ANAGNOSTOU (Strasbourg), meanwhile, introduced two case studies focused on the longer temporalities defined by the particular institutional and diplomatic settings of ballet and UNESCO's International Music Council. The papers showed the strength of performative artistic actions in discourses relating to humanity, and revealed how their emotional impact influenced commitments to human rights and humanitarian causes.

Panel 12 started off with JONATHAN VOGES (Hannover) on the League of Nations' Organization for Intellectual Cooperation and its efforts to „form the modern man,“ an endeavor that was motivated by a negative view of the masses and marred by disagreements about definitions of humanism and strategies to cultivate it. LUKAS SCHEMPER (Paris) spoke about the (failed) creation of the International Relief Union to provide aid in the wake of natural disasters. PAUL VON TRIGT (Leiden) discussed the development of disability rights at the international level and highlighted the importance of activists and social movements in bringing the idea of disability rights as human rights onto the agenda.

Panel 13 focused on indigenous populations and human rights. CATHLEEN CLARK (Toronto) highlighted transnational efforts of U.S. and Canadian indigenous groups at the Fourth Russell Tribunal on the Human Rights of Indians in the Americas in Rotterdam in 1980 to raise public awareness of human rights violations towards aboriginal

populations. BETTINA KOSCHADE (Montréal) addressed housing policies for Inuit in Nunavik, Québec, showing how the government's technocratic approach to housing clashes with the more complex understanding of housing and home by the local population. Discussants particularly drew attention to additional categories prevalent in juridico-political discourses, such as choice, dignity, and sovereignty.

Panel 14 explored expressions of human rights advocacy from the 1950s to the 1980s. DANIEL MANULAK (London, Ontario) addressed how and why the conservative Diefenbaker government of Canada opposed apartheid and joined with the non-white members of the Commonwealth to expel South Africa from the Commonwealth. NICHOLAS CULL (San Diego) traced the uses of public diplomacy in the movement against apartheid and explained the role of culture as a tool of public diplomacy on both sides. WILLIAM MICHAEL SCHMIDLI (Leiden) provided an analysis of Amnesty International's „Human Rights Now!“ concerts as both a reflection of „slacktivism“ and a genuine act of human rights consciousness raising.

Panel 15 critically discussed how visions of humanity have been represented and mediated in a mostly unpublished archive of photographs collected by the Canadian government on the one hand (SONYA DE LAAT, Hamilton) and in a contemporary museum dedicated to memorializing the Holocaust in Toronto (KATHRIN ANTWEILER, Gießen) on the other. Discussions particularly focused on questions concerning audience reception and on the specific histories these visions of humanity conjured to become meaningful. Additionally, the entangled processes of visualize human suffering and displacement in the contexts of 20th century transnational migration and other forms of suffering as a result of the settler colonial aspirations of Canada (and the United States) came to the fore in both talks.

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Culture and International History cycle, a retrospective panel (11) addressed visions for the future of CIH. DAVID ELLWOOD (Bologna) urged students to study Silicon Valley and the

global history of digitization. ROB KROES (Amsterdam) encouraged participants to pay more attention to the meaning behind visual display, notably the question of how the mind works by way of images and trains of visual associations. RICHARD PELLIS (Austin) reflected on „the golden age“ of American studies adding that the internationalization of the humanities appears to be over.

Overall, the conference thus highlighted the increasing urge, indeed, struggle and conflict over how to define and invoke „humanity“ since the late 19th century. Such definitions distinguish between humanity and humanities, between commonalities and concern for others, between national and state activities in the name of humanity and transnational endeavors, on the other. As the conference revealed, science, the arts, and notably non-verbal displays of a seeming „humanity“ played a pivotal role in this scenario, thus inviting for further in-depth inquiry.

Conference Overview:

Panel 1: Humanity: Interdisciplinary Conceptual Approaches

Chair: Ulla Haselstein (Freie Universität Berlin)

Benjamin Wilck (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): Feet, Feathers, and Toes: Aristotle on the Essence of the Human

Christos Marneros (University of Kent): Human Rights After Deleuze: Towards a Jurisprudence of a Becoming-Human

Suzy Killmister (Monash University, Melbourne): The Human in Human Rights

Panel 2: Towards New Visions of Humanity since the 17th Century

Chair: Birte Wege (Freie Universität Berlin)

Adam Hjorthén (Freie Universität Berlin): A Humanitarian Legacy? Settler Colonial History, International Relations, and the Impact of Swedish Exceptionalism in the Delaware Valley

Catherine Arnold (University of Memphis): Affairs of Humanity: Arguing for Humanitarian Intervention in Britain and Europe

Barbara Lambauer (SIRICE, Paris): Jewish

Philanthropy and Refugee Crisis in Eastern Europe, 1881–1914

Panel 3: Transnational Perspectives on Empire and Humanity

Chair: Claudia Jarzebowski (Freie Universität Berlin)

Jessica Gienow-Hecht (Freie Universität Berlin): Gender, Empire and Humanity in 1898

Sönke Kunkel (Freie Universität Berlin): Empires and Humanity: Transnational Humanitarianism and the Earthquake of Messina (1908)

Panel 4: Humanity and Internationalism during and after World War One

Chair: Sebastian Jobs (Freie Universität Berlin)

Andrew Johnston (Carleton University, Ottawa): Human Rights, the Great War, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's Critique of Nationalism

Ilaria Scaglia (Aston University, Birmingham): „Humanity“ and „the Humanities“ as „Emotional Communities“ at the International University Sanatorium of Leysin

Benjamin Martin (Uppsala Universitet): Cultural Diplomacy against Humanity: The Geopolitical Visions of Interwar Cultural Treaties

Keynote

Chair: Jessica Gienow Hecht (Freie Universität Berlin)

Siep Stuurman (Universiteit Utrecht): Paradoxes of Equality and Common Humanity: From the Enlightenment to the Present Time

Panel 5: Cultural Humanity: Art and Museums in China since the 1900s

Chair: Nixi Cura (SOAS, University of London)

K. Ian Shin (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor): „The greatest of all record of human society“: U.S.O Collectors, Chinese Art Preservation, and the Troubling Roots of Cultural Humanitarianism, 1900–1920

Yanqiu Zheng (Misericordia University, Dallas, PA): A Tenuous Beginning: The National Palace Museum and Chinese Cultural Diplomacy, 1933–1939

Kazushi Minami (University of Texas, Austin, TX): From Mao to Beethoven to the Goddess of Democracy: U.S.-Chinese Art Diplomacy, 1971–1989

Panel 6: Humanity in Times of War: World War II and After

Chair: Sönke Kunkel (Freie Universität Berlin)

Catherine E. Rymph (University of Missouri, Columbia, MO): Child Evacuation: American Responses to Imperiled Children during the Second World War

Linh Vu (Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ): Sovereignty of Corporeal Remains: World War II Military Graves in the China-India-Burma Theater

Panel 7: Bones, Bricks and Humanity

Chair: Anne Nassauer (Freie Universität Berlin)

Michael L. Krenn (Appalachian State University, Boone, NC): Hearts, Minds, and Skulls: The International Debate on the Nature of Humanity in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Andrew W. Bell (Boston University): American Archaeology, Pan-American Visions, and the Rise and Fall of „Our Oldest Civilization“, 1915–1940

Sarah Epping (Freie Universität Berlin): From Ancient Mesopotamia to 19th Century USA: An Exclusionary Vision of Humanity through Archaeological Excavations in Nippur, Iraq

Panel 8: Humanity and Visual Media

Chair: Frank Kelleter (Freie Universität Berlin)

Valérie Gorin (Université de Genève): Child Icons in International News: Shaping a Common Visual Culture of (in) Humanity

Suzanne Langlois (York University): The UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948–1949): Visual strategies for a Common Humanity

Panel 9: Humanity and Religion after 1945

Chair: Arnd Bauerkämper (Freie Universität Berlin)

Bastiaan Bouwman (London School of Economics and Political Science): Universal Rights in a Divided World: The Human Rights Engagement of the World Council of Churches from the 1940s to the 1970s

David Brydan (King's College London): „Supernatural, Supranational and World-Embracing“: Catholic Internationalism and Christian Visions of Humanity after 1945

Betsy Konefal (College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA): Liberation Theology and Visions of Revolutionary Justice in 1960s Guatemala

Panel 10: Humanity on Stage: Music, Ballets, and Human Rights after 1945

Chair: Esteban Buch (École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris)

Stéphanie Gonçalves (Université libre de Bruxelles): Choreographing Humanity. Maurice Béjart in the 1960s

Anaïs Fléchet (Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines): Towards a New Musical Humanism: Yehudi Menuhin and the International Music Council of the UNESCO (1969–1975)

Panagiota Anagnostou (Université de Strasbourg): Music, Politics and International Mobilization: The Case of Mikis Theodorakis

Igor Contreras Zubillaga (University of Huddersfield): „La noche más larga“: Music against Capital Punishment in Late-Francoist Spain

Panel 11: Culture and International History, Twenty Years After: A Retrospective

Chair: Jessica Gienow-Hecht (Freie Universität Berlin)

David Ellwood (John Hopkins University SAIS Europe, Bologna)

Richard Pells (University of Texas, Austin, TX)

Rob Kroes (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Panel 12: International Organizations and Humanity

Chair: Lora Viola (Freie Universität Berlin)

Jonathan Voges (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover): The „Formation of the Modern Man:“ The League of Nations’ Organization for Intellectual Cooperation and the Search for a „New Humanism“

Lukas Schemper (Sciences Po, Paris): Protecting Humanity from Disaster: An Entangled History of Thought, Laws, and Institutions

Paul van Trigt (Universiteit Leiden): Including Disabled Persons in Humanity: A Genealogy of Disability as a Human Rights Issue

Panel 13: Indigenous Movements and Human Rights

Chair: David Bosold (Freie Universität Berlin)

Cathleen Clark (University of Toronto): „No Single Strategy will Save the Indian People“: Using International Forums for International Indigenous Rights Action

Bettina Koschade (Concordia University, Montréal): Decolonizing Housing in Québec’s North: Inuit Homes, Settler Colonialism, and the UN’s Right to Adequate Housing

Panel 14: Humanity and Human Rights in the 1970s and 1980s

Chair: Laura Belmonte (Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK)

William Michael Schmidli (Universiteit Leiden): „Rockin’ to Free the World?“ Amnesty International’s Benefit Concert Tours, 1986–1988

Daniel Manulak (University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario): A Movement of Movements: Canada, South African Apartheid, and the Struggle for Global Racial Equality, 1984–1990

Nicholas Cull (University of Southern California, San Diego, CA): Humanity against Apartheid: Networked Humanitarian Cultural Diplomacy and the Liberation of South Africa 1970–1990

Panel 15: Visions of Humanity since the 1990s

Chair: Martin Lütke (Freie Universität Berlin)

Katrin Antweiler (Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen): Constructing a Global Citizen through Memory? Contemporary Transnational Memory Politics in the Light of Human Rights Education

Sonya de Laat (McMaster University, Hamilton): Images of Refugees: The Role of Canada’s International Development Photography Library in Exposing and Concealing Humanity, 1987–2013

Tagungsbericht *Visions of Humanity (Culture and International History, VI)*. 06.05.2019–08.05.2019, Berlin, in: H-Soz-Kult 19.08.2019.