

Crossing Boundaries: Rethinking the Humanities across Disciplines

(December 2-3, 2022)

Being continually transformed, the humanities have expanded into a discursive field of trends, movements, and methodologies that have appropriated the thoughts, ideas, and viewpoints from social and other sciences by transgressing and crossing traditional boundaries, limitations, and demarcations. The humanities which traditionally include the study of disciplines such as language, literature, arts, history, culture, and philosophy rarely prove to be “disciplined” as each one often tends to encroach upon prescribed and reserved territories of other disciplines not traditionally humanities labeled. “Classical humanistic disciplines,” Claus Emmeche, David Budtz Pedersen, and Frederik Stjernfelt point out, “are increasingly interacting with societal fields and investigating socio-economic challenges, such as globalization, multiculturalism, equality, democracy, security and health” (*Mapping Frontier Research in the Humanities*, 3). This crossing over cannot be limited to the related fields in the humanities. Mikhail Epstein claims that all the fields in the sciences, such as “mathematics, cybernetics, informatics, cognitive science, semiotics, neuropsychology, and the theory and practice of artificial intelligence ... depend upon the humanities’ focus on the self-reflexivity of any consciousness—be it that of God, human, or machine” (*Transformative Humanities* 10). The humanities, in other words, appear to dwell in a continually expanding field of borderless interaction with all disciplines which inform our knowledge of the world and determine the perspectives employed in considering the subject and the object of studies that overlap in the humanities. Epstein also proposes an interpretation of how the humanities need to be viewed when he introduced a term made of the meaning of boundaries. The term “*infinition*” blends “*definition* and *infinity* (both from Latin *finis*, meaning ‘a boundary’)” to denote “indefinite definition.” *Infinition*, he asserts, is “for the humanities what the transcendental number ... is for mathematics: an endless approximation to, and escape from, discrete definition” (Epstein 112). Yet, borderlines and limits, Frank Furedi reminds us, “serve as an invitation for their transcendence [and] we need borders both for the realisation of existential security as well as for providing a starting point for acts of transcendence (*Why Borders Matter*, 11).

The aim of the conference is to give the floor for discussion about the significance of boundaries, real and symbolic, and how they reinforce our knowledge and understanding of the meaning of and the practice in the humanities – from crossing the borders on the political map to the problematization of literary and theoretical canons to theorizing the enunciations of intertextuality to the discussion of the linguistic and social parameters of polyglossia and transculturalism, and to practical approaches to teaching culture, literature, language, and media literacy in the digital world.

We are looking for answers to the following questions:

- How do boundaries affect the meaning and interpretation of any cultural production since the object and the subject of study coincide in the humanities?

- How do culture, media, language, and literature make sense of boundaries and limitations? Are boundaries and border zones ontologically essential in the humanities?
- Does the meaning and perception of the humanities change in the context of dialogue between the disciplines and how?
- Are the humanities originally a product of mutually exclusive or complementary disciplines?
- Do overcoming and crossing boundaries create new boundaries?
- If the humanities form a field of discussion with broken borders or borderless terrains/liminal spaces, can humanity live without them? How far do the borders of the borders go?
- How do postmodern critiques, such as deconstruction, postcoloniality, and the variety of posthuman ideas disrupt/subvert existing interpretations of texts and cultural phenomena?
- How do specific works and authors, media narratives, philosophical texts, and linguistic phenomena discuss/make use of boundaries, limitations, and borders as part of the discussion on the interdisciplinarity of the humanities? How do these cross the boundaries, borderlines, and borders of existing and established disciplines?

We invite submissions of abstracts for papers discussing various aspects of Humanities – Society – Sciences and their enunciations of boundaries, including, but not limited to, literature, language, linguistics, culture, social science, and information technology.

The language of the conference is English and Bulgarian.

The conference is planned to be in a hybrid format (in-person and online). Presentations will be approximately 15-20 minutes, each followed by a 10-minute discussion.

Please submit your presentation abstract (150-250 words).

The deadline for proposals is 26 November 2022

Please send your proposals to the following email:

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