Call for Papers

15th Residency Conference
Ph.D. Program in Interdisciplinary Studies

Boundaries

Nicholas Serenati, "Crossing Boundaries" (2009)

Erlanger, Kentucky
January 8, 2014

What is at stake in the struggles about the meaning of the social world is power over the classificatory schemes and systems which are the basis of the representations of the groups and therefore of their mobilization and demobilization.

--Pierre Bourdieu, "Classes and Classification" (1979)

The growing presence of hybrid communities documents the widely perceived gap between the traditional structure of knowledge and the needs and interests of the modern world.

--Julie Thompson Klein, "Toward a Social Epistemology of Transdisciplinarity" (1998)
In the realm of knowledge-production, boundaries are mental constructs that facilitate the formation of human knowledge. They are routinely drawn and redrawn to demarcate conceptual spaces wherein knowledge is made and maintained. As such, boundaries help us to make sense of certain aspects of the world. But at the same time, these boundaries also render us relatively blind to other aspects of the world. According to Morgan Meyer, boundaries are both necessary and problematic. They are necessary, Meyer maintains, "to produce an enclosed space of interest populated by a demarcated object or set of objects to concentrate upon." Without boundaries, Meyer argues, "it would indeed be difficult to produce intelligible, comprehensible, logical and focused accounts." Yet, any drawing of boundaries is inherently problematic, Meyer underscores, because it "reduces complexity and fragments reality, thus producing partial, selective, situated knowledges." Boundaries may thus be understood as paradigms that, as Thomas Kuhn has famously shown in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962), delineate what sorts of ideas are thinkable at particular times.

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when Western academic institutions were marked by a proliferation of increasingly specialized and professionalized disciplines, boundaries of inquiry were drawn rather rigidly as scholars were compelled to engage "in a differentiating activity called 'boundary-work','" which, David Shumway and Ellen Messer-Davidow explain, "entails the development of explicit arguments to justify the particular divisions of knowledge and of the social strategies to prevail in them." In the wake various social and anti-foundational movements of the postmodern era that gave rise to area studies (e.g., African, Postcolonial, and Women's Studies) as well as modern interdisciplinarity, though, the boundary-work that scholars undertake has become ever more complex. As Julie Thompson Klein notes, since "the latter half of the twentieth century...heterogeneity, hybridity, complexity, and interdisciplinarity [have] become characterizing traits of knowledge." The abundance of spatial metaphors in contemporary academic discourses attests to this. Rather than narrowly situating our work within established disciplinary paradigms, we often speak, more broadly, about fields of inquiry, knowledge domains, webs of knowledge, border crossing, mapping out configurations, and areas of study, when describing and justifying our scholarly endeavors. And the boundaries we redraw, contest, and/or blur in this process frequently include demarcations of academic and popular knowledge, "hard" sciences and "soft" sciences, as well as identity concepts such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and nationality.

For the fifteenth installment of our conference series, we are inviting proposals for individual and panel presentation that grapple with the complex problem of setting boundaries in the process of creative and/or scholarly inquiry. Some general questions that may be explore include: How do we select the subjects of our creative and/or scholarly inquiries? What guides our decisions to include or exclude certain data, performances, texts, and/or voices? In what ways are our creative and scholarly works marked by the particular approaches, conventions, and methodologies we adopt or adapt? What are the benefits and potential pitfalls of crossing boundaries of knowledge-making (disciplinary or otherwise)? The following list of potential topics is suggestive rather than exclusive:

- Breaking Boundaries
- Crossing Boundaries
- Boundaries of Difference
- Boundaries of Inquiry
- Boundaries of Identity
- Boundaries of Knowledge
- Overstepping Boundaries
- Protective Boundaries
- Borders versus Boundaries
- Ethics at the Boundaries
- Boundaries and Margins
- Creative and Destructive Boundaries
• Social Justice and Boundaries
• Interdisciplinarity and Boundaries

Please join us!

**Submission Guidelines**

In addition to conference presentations that follow traditional models, we strongly encourage individual and group submissions that showcase creative work and/or utilize alternative approaches such as roundtables, poster sessions, storytelling sessions, video installations, and art exhibits. The deadline for proposal submissions is **November 15, 2013**.

Please forward all proposals via email, c/o “Review and Organization Committee,” to karsten.piep@myunion.edu. Please include the following information:

- Name
- Institutional and/or program affiliation(s)
- Mailing address (including zip code)
- Phone number(s)
- E-mail address
- Title of the proposed presentation
- Abstract of 200-500 words
- AV equipment needs, if any
- Special needs, if any

Panel or roundtable organizers should include the above information for each participant.

**Location**

The conference will be held at Northern Kentucky University's [METS Center](#) in Erlanger, Kentucky.

The NKU METS Center 3861 Olympic Boulevard Erlanger, Kentucky 41018 859-647-6387

**Registration**

Presenters will have to confirm their conference participation within one week of receiving the acceptance notice. There is no registration fee.

**Contact**

For all correspondence regarding submission and/or program content, please contact Karsten Piep at karsten.piep@myunion.edu