

26 November 2023, Belgrade

SALZBURG GLOBAL SEMINAR FOR AMERICAN STUDIES 2023
Beyond the Nation-State? Borders, Boundaries, and the Future of Democratic Pluralism

PARTICIPATION REPORT

I extend my sincere appreciation to the European Association for American Studies for affording me the opportunity to participate in the Salzburg Global American Studies Program for 2023, themed "Beyond the Nation-State? Borders, Boundaries, and the Future of Democratic Pluralism," held from September 19 to 23, and to explore this important topic for American Studies.

The program brought together an international and diverse group of approximately 50 professionals, including academics, policymakers, artists, and activists from various disciplines, such as literature, culture, history, and politics. It included a multiplicity of intersecting viewpoints on the topic of border reassessment, in various forms, from round tables, discussion panels, and plenary lectures to informal conversations and networking. Engaging in discussions, we explored the impact of "cultural forces," ranging from contemporary literature to film, which systematically challenge the established notions of "outer and interior borders" across geopolitical, cultural, literary, and artistic domains. At the same time, the participants discussed the ways in which American Studies as a discipline has tackled the topic of borders in the context of democratic pluralism. Some of the key questions addressed during the seminar included border reassessment, borders of the mind, and the multifaceted nature of "borders," encompassing physical, spatial, religious, historical, cultural, and social dimensions. Participants deliberated on borders as figurative spaces, examined current trends in cross-border relations, and explored the experiences of indigenous communities in the context of modern geopolitical borders. Additionally, discussions covered cultural borders and borders in culture, and the intersection of borders and American Studies.

The topic of this year's program was of particular interest to me as the concept of borders and boundaries regarding nation states is closely connected to my research interests. A book project which I am currently working on focuses on the poetics and politics of home and hospitality in modern and contemporary literature, which I am renegotiating through various intersecting perspectives, from geocriticism and spatial studies to migration, gender, and trauma studies. In this sense the discussions which I had the opportunity to engage in at Salzburg Global Seminar, especially those organized around the topic of borders in fact and fiction and the question of the contribution of contemporary literature, theater, and other cultural works to the general understanding of boundaries, were most inspiring to me. Moreover, the versatility of topics and perspectives regarding borders coming from various fields, academic and non-academic, theoretical and practical, significantly influenced, and to some extent, redirected my current research on the poetics of space in literature. Finally, the seminar facilitated discussions on potential avenues for future cooperation, joint projects, publications, and collaborations, and I have maintained contact with several participants with whom I hope to work more closely in the future.

Salzburg Global Seminar offered unique and fresh perspectives into the the field of American Studies, and I feel honored to have participated in this year's program. Therefore, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all members of the EAAS Board for supporting my application, particularly to EAAS Vice-President Professor Aleksandra Izgarjan, EAAS President Professor Philip McGowan, EAAS Secretary General Ingrid Gessner, and EAAS Treasurer Professor Carmen Birkle, for their time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Aleksandra Vukotić
Assistant Professor
English Department
University of Belgrade – Faculty of Philology
Studentski trg 3
11000 Belgrade, Serbia
aleksandra.vukotic@fil.bg.ac.rs