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**CALL FOR PAPERS
CONFERENCE:
“Borders”: Metaphorical and Physical
3- 5 March 2016**

The literary critical establishment has long practiced the breaking of boundaries and the unsettling of monolithic structures. The consequent disarray of taxonomies and discursive contestation in the national space allows for a greater heterogeneity and alterity. Yet it is also a truism that the cosmopolitan individual today is generally thought of as a privileged person for whom the heart wrenching banner atop the Cibeles Palace in Madrid - a beacon of hope for the war torn victims in Syria who have been turned away from the borders of some European countries - is a text and not a reality.

Borders are more material than metaphorical for the majority of the world's citizens. They are impermeable and fraught with danger for nomads, refugees and undocumented migrants and are far from being just textual and theoretical. Though no one side or nation owns the frontier line yet power differentials determine the ease or difficulty of border crossing, both

physical and metaphorical. Similarly one's cultural location and/or gender determines personal and intimate border crossings.

It has been averred that differences are sought and invented to justify borders (Frederik Barth, *Ethnic groups and Boundaries*). The years between the two world wars saw an increase in the stateless person or literally the person without *status* (Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*), who fell into the interstices of two dividing lines. Globalization has brought about the need for shared responsibility for those displaced by wars and the French philosopher refers to a 'city of refuge' akin to the churches of medieval times that provided shelter. And yet are these 'cities of refuge' to be mere resettlements, rarefied and functioning as ghettos, a no man's land with its own language and culture? Borderlands as in the case of the U.S. – Mexican border are often thought of as islands disconnected from the two countries they straddle with hybrid and 'bastard' languages of undefinable origin.

Current spatial, temporal and political realities are forcing new theoretical questions to the fore and we invite proposals for a conference on Borders: Metaphorical and Physical. We will discuss questions related to themes such as cosmopolitanism, nomadism, hybridity and nationalism in literature and the social sciences. Is border writing a 'global literature' as its optimistic adherents believe? Can the multiple languages found in border language do away with hegemonies in culture and language? How does the sensibility of border writing, i.e. the straddling of different traditions, languages and cultures inform writing elsewhere in areas far from the border? Does the material disequilibrium across the two sides of a border upset this perceived sensibility?

With the inclusion of notions allied with the border we hope to widen the discussion around borders and their representation in literature and the humanities.

[Deadline for submission of abstracts (200-300 words): 30 January 2016]