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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Scientific discipline: Cultural and Religious Studies

Title of the doctoral dissertation: **Capturing the Nebula: The Scientography of Cognitive Humanities. A study of the ontoepistemologies of culture**

The dissertation examines the processes of cognitivization emerging within the humanities—both in their broad, systemic dimension, which seeks to identify features that transcend traditional, discipline-bound frameworks, and in their focused dimension, which investigates the impact of these processes on the category of *culture*. The argument is organized around these two complementary yet differently scaled objectives.

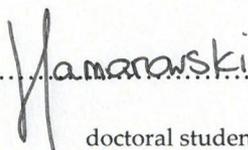
The first part develops a macroscale account of the cognitive turn in the humanities. It traces the genealogy of terms associated with cognitivization, mapping their dispersed trajectories, shifting meanings, and limited explanatory force in relation to the question of what constitutes a humanistic engagement with the cognitive sciences. In response to the fragmented and decentralized nature of these discourses, the dissertation proposes an alternative mode of systematization—one grounded in an alliance between the humanities and scientometrics. By employing computational tools of scientometric analysis, it demonstrates that the field of cognitive humanities assumes a heterogeneous, nebular structure in which diverse epistemological and methodological models intersect. To navigate this complexity, a two-dimensional model of the cognitivization of the humanities is introduced, allowing for the organization of heterogeneous projects while maintaining sensitivity to their internal diversity.

The second part shifts from this panoramic vantage point to a microscale analysis centered on *culture*—a historically pivotal and theoretically charged category within the humanities. It reconstructs the evolving status of culture within the cognitive sciences, tracing a trajectory from the marginalization of anthropological and cultural dimensions in classical cognitive science to their recent revitalization within cultural-cognitive paradigms. Examining how



culture is (re)defined in the context of the cognitive humanities, the study argues that despite an ostensible openness to cognitive perspectives, engagement with the notion of culture remains partial, inconsistent, and often conceptually fragmented. A systematic review of the literature reveals three dominant definitional and operational tendencies: (1) *bridging approaches* aimed at destabilizing the nature–culture binary; (2) *psycho-evolutionary frameworks* embedding culture within evolutionary accounts of cognition; and (3) *reductive models* that treat culture as an approximative or derivative construct.

The findings suggest that the cognitive humanities do not constitute a unified theoretical formation nor a linear sequence of methodological translations. Rather, they emerge as a site of polyphonic negotiation among heterogeneous regimes of knowledge, where the humanities and the cognitive sciences continuously renegotiate their boundaries, vocabularies, and epistemic commitments. By combining scientometric analysis with theoretical inquiry, the dissertation offers the first comprehensive account of the cognitive humanities within Polish scholarship, while also proposing alternative modes of conceptual organization attuned to the shifting ecologies of contemporary knowledge production.


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