

**CfP: Workshop: European Centers and Peripheries in the Political Novel (Deadline: December 10, 2023)**

April 25-26, 2024

Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin

When analyzing asymmetries between centers, semi-peripheries, and peripheries, literary scholars draw on various theoretical and methodological traditions, such as post- and decolonial approaches or, as for example the Warwick Research Collective, world-systems analysis. Some of these literary scholars rather emphasize asymmetries and exchanges between (the) European center(s) and non-European (semi-)peripheries, while paying less attention to how global economic centers such as Europe – whatever its boundaries may be – are marked by internal center-periphery-dynamics (e.g., between Germany, or France, and Eastern Europe). Additionally, sociological approaches in world literature studies (e.g., Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti) focus on examining center-periphery dynamics in literary fields, or systems, and highlight how these dynamics influence literary form. They supplement approaches that analyze how specific literary texts represent center-periphery-asymmetries.

The workshop builds on these lines of inquiry, yet organizes its discussion around the question of how center-periphery-dynamics are articulated in explicitly political terms by the political novel, a genre that we tentatively understand as a set of procedures by means of which a novel is coded and decoded as political in a particular constellation of circumstances, resulting in it being recognized, or misread, as political. The workshop aims to put special emphasis on examining Europe as a combined and uneven formation characterized by economic, social, cultural, and literary asymmetries. Finally, we wish to investigate the question of what formal and textual features are common, if not typical, of literary capitals (centers) on the one hand and margins and peripheries on the other, as well as the question of how literary centers and peripheries respond to political novels – and how these literary texts, their authors, publishers, and reading publics anticipate, react to, and interact with these responses.

Further questions we hope to engage with are:

- To what extent are interrelations between different kinds of centers, semi-peripheries and peripheries represented in the political novel?
- Which topics are particularly relevant to and which aesthetic forms are particularly suitable for literary negotiations of economic, political, social, and cultural centers and peripheries?
- How have center-periphery-dynamics in the literary world-system and in the European literary field in particular affected aesthetic manifestations of the political novel in different European literary regions and in different historical contexts?

- How do the specifically European spatial and literary relations interact (uncover, reflect, problematize, counter, resist) with the relations between Europe and other regions across the globe?
- Can the political novel be used as a resource to develop a better understanding of Europe as characterized by economic, political, social, cultural, and literary asymmetries? How does it reflect processes of European integration and disintegration?
- Which theoretical and methodological approaches are particularly helpful to discuss center-periphery-dynamics in and around literary texts in Europe and beyond?

We seek short input presentations of no more than 10-15 minutes length that engage with the proposed topic through theoretical or methodological considerations, analyses of novels, or studies of literary fields. In addition to discussing the input presentations, the workshop will be dedicated to the discussion of several brief excerpts from pertinent texts chosen by the organizers. Please send abstracts of about 250 words and a short CV (one page max.) by December 10 to: [caponeu@zfl-berlin.org](mailto:caponeu@zfl-berlin.org).

We plan to publish the input presentations as working papers. Workshop participants will also be invited to submit individual text portraits, i.e. short presentations of one political novel each that illustrate a selected problem of the workshop. In this way, participants will make an important contribution to the Map of the Political Novels in Europe, a digital repository which the CAPONEU Consortium is compiling.

This workshop is part of the European Union-sponsored Horizon Europe-project “The Cartography of the Political Novel in Europe” and is organized by Kyung-Ho Cha, Patrick Eiden-Offe, Johanna-Charlotte Horst, Ivana Perica, and Christoph Schaub.

<https://www.zfl-berlin.org/project/the-cartography-of-the-political-novel-in-europe.html>