



International Conference (University of Haifa, 22nd -23rd May, 2017)

**The Representation of the Relationship between Center and Periphery
in the Contemporary Novel**

University of Haifa (Israel) - University of Lille 3 (France)

Call for papers

The notion of the relationship between center and periphery, like that of physical space, which derives from the geographical domain, has entered the literary field. Difficult to define, these terms are relative concepts distinguishable by the gap between them. It is this gap that we intend to explore in its representation in the contemporary novel, based on a comparative perspective through various cultural and linguistic lenses.

In recent decades, the relationship between center and periphery has been strongly represented in literatures of various linguistic and cultural roots. Writers "travel" in the urban periphery in spaces that are often omitted from the city community, the 'polis'. In doing so, they strengthen the opposition between the center and the suburbs that become, in fact, the agents of a symbolic redefinition of the contemporary city. The standpoint of this call for papers will not be limited to the urban space or to the simple opposition of central location versus peripheral location, but to all forms of representation of social hybridity. We will analyze the subcategories of their interdependent relationships, including power and domination between hegemony and marginality.

The concepts of restricted areas and intermediate spaces will be questioned. The perception of the human being in his spatial dimension, or even his definition in relation to space is related to the question of otherness, one of the major subjects of contemporary philosophy.

Some routes of inquiry

While focusing on works in the light of center-periphery relationship, we will examine the fluctuations between hegemony and marginalization, loneliness and otherness, omission and denial, vacuum and excess.

How is the solitude of peripheries expressed? Often used as a synonym for isolation but also for abandonment and exclusion, solitude is inherent to thought. However, it is not only the solitude of the reclusive genius, it is also that of the rootless, the wandering, both gone and eager to return to reside among their fellow human beings.

How is marginality manifested? Defined as a deviation from a center, its position generally refers to a center from which it is banned, it always relates to a specific society as a figure of lack and absence or loss.

We will focus on an identification and classification of spaces in order to try to understand their function in relation to the thematic strategy of the novel. It would be useful, for example, to define the function of certain symbolic sites in urban spaces such as the café, the restaurant, the street; or private spaces such as the apartment or the kitchen; or some meeting places for "marginal" people - places generally reserved for women, nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, etc.

The passageway, the transitional place from a peripheral area, whether geographic, communal, sociological or other, to a more or less hospitable central space, is always dangerous. It inevitably leads to a change, evidenced by the concepts of emptiness, forgetfulness, excess, that produce particular rituals or confined or institutionalized behaviors, consequences of a refusal to face reality.

The main objective will be to identify the textual representation of the challenge of Center and Periphery as well as their role and significance in the diegesis. Thus, a new light on the contemporary novel could be offered to literary specialists.

*Proposals, in the form of a half-page summary (in French or English) should be submitted to the organizers of the symposium:

Ruth Amar : ramar@research.haifa.ac.il, Françoise Saquer-Sabin : fsaquer-sabin@nordnet.fr before 15 July 2016.

The answer of the scientific committee will be communicated to the authors on October 1, 2016.

Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes

Presentation languages: English (preferably) or French.

Organizers: Ruth Amar, University of Haifa (Israel). Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature; Françoise Saquer-Sabin, University of Lille, Humanities and Social Sciences (France)

Scientific Committee: Nitza Ben-Dov (Haifa), Dennis Sobolev (Haifa), Larisa Fialkova (Haifa) Silvia Adler (Bar Ilan), Martine Benoit (Lille 3), Stéphane Chaudier(Lille 3), Michèle Tauber (Paris 3), Maxime Decout (Lille 3)