



Caponeu

Working Paper

Citation:

Cha, Kyung-Ho, and Ivana Perica, Aurore Peyroles, Christoph Schaub. 2025. "European Centers and Peripheries in the Political Novel." In *European Centers and Peripheries in the Political Novel (Caponeu Working Papers)*, edited by Kyung-Ho Cha, Ivana Perica, Aurore Peyroles, and Christoph Schaub, 3–5. <https://www.caponeu.eu/cdp/materials/european-centers-and-peripheries-in-the-political-novel-caponeu-working-papers>.

28 January 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union



UK Research
and Innovation

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101094658.

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

This working paper relates to the workshop *European Centres and Peripheries in the Political Novel*, which took place at the Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung (Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research) on June 6–7, 2024. The workshop was organized by Kyung-Ho Cha, Patrick Eiden-Offe, Johanna-Charlotte Horst, Ivana Perica, Aurore Peyroles, and Christoph Schaub.

This working paper is produced as part of the activities of the research consortium *The Cartography of the Political Novel* (Caponeu), funded by the European Union and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). <https://www.caponeu.eu/>

© 2025 copyright with the authors, editing © 2025 with the editors

This work is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). For details go to <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to any content (such as graphs, figures, photos, excerpts, etc.) that is not part of the Open Access publication. These may require obtaining further permission from the rights holder. The obligation to research and clear permission lies solely with the party re-using the material.

Kyung-Ho Cha

Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin
k.cha54321@gmail.com

Ivana Perica

Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin
perica@zfl-berlin.org

Aurore Peyroles

Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin
peyroles@zfl-berlin.org

Christoph Schaub

Universität Vechta
Christoph.Schaub@uni-vechta.de

European Centers and Peripheries in the Political Novel

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 (2015), 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., Casanova 2004; Moretti 1998, 2000) 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.

This collection of working papers builds on these lines of inquiry, yet organize its discussion around the question of how center-periphery-dynamics are articulated in explicitly political terms by the political novel, a genre tentatively understood here as a set of procedures through which a novel is coded and decoded as political within a particular constellation of circumstances, resulting in its recognition or misreading as political. The papers aim to put special emphasis on examining Europe as a combined and uneven formation characterized by economic, social, cultural, and literary asymmetries. They 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 that the papers address include:

- 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?

Bibliography

Casanova, Pascale. 2004. *The World Republic of Letters*. Translated by M.B.

DeBevoise. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Moretti, Franco. 1998. *Atlas of the European novel, 1800-1900*. London/New York: Verso.

Moretti, Franco. 2000. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review* 1: 54-68.

Warwick Research Collective (WReC). 2015. *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.