2nd Circular for the ISLT6
March 2012

LIMEN & TEXT

UAM UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE MADRID

The sixth international seminar on

LIMINALITY AND TEXT April 16-18, 2012

The LIMEN Group and the Department of English Studies at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid are pleased to announce that the next ISLT ("The Subject on the Threshold") will be held at the UAM in the Spring of 2012. The venue will be the Faculty of Arts (UAM). This will be the sixth in a highly successful series of seminars devoted to the topic of liminality. The first five were held in March 1999, April 2001, March 2003, March 2005, March 2007, and the articles that resulted from them have appeared as five volumes in the series Studies in Liminality and Literature, edited by THE GATEWAY PRESS (http://www.northangerlibrary.com/gateway.asp)

The International Seminar on Liminality and Text began as a modest forum designed to put to the test a number of ideas and research lines which had in common little more than broad concerns with margins, with things 'on the edge', with the non-canonical or the ignored, with the 'unstructured' or the unclassifiable. Probably the one concept most of us swore by was the rite-of- passage structure outlined by anthropologists Van Gennep and Turner. But were we all speaking of the same things in the same way? Could the anthropological concept of 'the liminal' be simply transplanted to literature studies? In what way were notions like "margin", "threshold", "border" and so on being actually used by scholars from different disciplines? What 'theory' of the limen (if any) could be invoked in support of our research? The 13-year history of the ISLT is the history of a growing awareness that a theory of thresholds that would implicate not only passages but also texts was both a convenient and a necessary tool.

The Organizing Committee,

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For further information on liminality matters and the Seminar check the new website LIMEN and TEXT: www.limenandtext.com

For information on the Project check www.northangerlibrary.com

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ISLT 6: THE SUBJECT ON THE THRESHOLD

The multidisciplinary study of the Subject has traditionally pointed to the capacity for theoretical abstraction as the most salient feature linked to this concept. The "I" and the actions and discourses it produces have led to theories and to enriching debates along history that have confirmed its problematic nature; from the Cartesian cogito, which portrays the thinking subject both enacting and doubting its own existence, the fragile ontology of the subject is manifest. Even in periods when it is conceived as the unquestionable centre of the universe and of discourse (the 18th century and most of the 19th century), the Subject appears as the site of a dialogue between antagonistic concepts that place it on a threshold between agency and subordination, self and other, art and experience, body and mind, silence and a plurality of voices. In the 20 th Century, when meaning ceases to have its origin and goal in individual experience and dissolves into structures underlying the visible facts, the Subject can be said to reach the ultimate threshold, one which is at once tragic and essential since it is defined by simultaneous affirmation and negation.

According to this hypothesis, the theory of liminality appears as the ideal discursive tool to study the Subject in a new light, offering as it does a single frame of reference to the large collection of phenomena and problems associated with it. If the Subject is bound to occupy a space necessarily defined in binary or multiple terms, it seems logical to bring a liminal approach to bear upon this figure so as to highlight its ambivalence and complexity. Conversely, for a budding theory of liminality it is no longer simply a question of defining thresholds and looking at what happens to Subjects when they approach, cross or occupy them. Since current critical theory conceives the Subject itself –wherever it be and whatever it does– as defined in relation to lines of demarcation that can be viewed as ontological thresholds, the Subject would appear to have an essentially liminal nature.

The modern conceptual demolition of the individual initiated by Marxist and Freudian theories is developed in Structuralism, portraying the Subject as a construct and as a consequence of impersonal systems and structures that determine its social existence, mental life and linguistic experience. This tendency –which some have thought anti-humanistic– consolidates with Poststructuralism and Postmodernism, inasmuch as they foster the debate on the nature of those underlying structures, and expose many of the cultural assumptions of the western world, particularly those concerning the Subject.

To register for the 6th ISLT please complete and return this form to belen.piqueras@uam.es

Name
Surname
E-mail address
Affiliation

While there are no attendance fees, all persons wishing to attend will be asked to pay a small contribution to defray a variety of costs including coffee, programme, photocopies and so on. Audience members are expected to cover for their own travel and accommodation expenses.

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Programme

MONDAY 16 April

All talks will last up to 50 minutes, to be followed by debate for up to twenty minutes. Coffee will be served at around 10.00 and again around 15.00, and will be available throughout the morning and afternoon.

9.00-9.10 Seminar opening

9.10-10.20 Richard Ellis, Nottingham Trent University (UK)
"The Readerly and Writerly in Charles Chesnutt's 'The Colonel's Dream".

10.20-11.30 David Murray, University of Nottingham (UK)
"Performing Self and Decentred Subject: Revisiting the Question of Voice".

11.30-12.40 Ana Manzanas, Universidad de Salamanca (Spain)
"Liminal Territories: The Divisibility of the Line in Thomas King's "Borders" and Courtney Hunt's *Frozen River*".

12.40-14.00 LUNCH

14.10-15.20 Heilna Du Plooy, University of the North-West (Potchefstroom, South-Africa)
"Between Past and Future: Temporal Thresholds in Narrative Texts".

15.20-16.30 Mar Gallego, Universidad de Huelva (Spain)
"Hybrid Identity and Migration in Agnès Agboton's *Más allá del mar de arena* and Fatou Diome's *En un lugar del atlántico*".

16.30-17.40 Stephen Wolfe, University of Tromsø (Norway)
"Liminality through Drowning: The Aesthetics of Death and Memory".

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TUESDAY 17 April

9.00-10.10 Mary Farrell, Universitat Jaume I (Castellón, Spain)
"Who are we when faced with empty space in the painterly and cinematic arts?".

10.10-11.20 Beatriz Sánchez, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain)
"Complexity and Liminality: a Model of Characterization in Gothic Fiction".

11.20-12.30 Peter Messent, University of Nottingham (UK)
"Liminality and Patricia Highsmith's Ripley Novels".

12.30-14.00 LUNCH

14.10-15.20 Johan Schimanski, University of Tromsø (Norway)
"Liminality and Borders in Literary Aesthetics".

15.20-16.30 Robert Samuels, The Open University (UK)
"Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* as Liminal Art".

16.30-17.40 ROUND TABLE:
"The Future of Liminality Studies"
Chair: Miriam Mandel, Tel-Aviv University

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WEDNESDAY 18 April

9.00-10.10 Susan Broadhurst, Brunel University (London, UK)
"Liminality, Neuroaesthetics and Practices of Performance and Technology".

10.10-11.20 Hein Viljoen, University of the North-West (Potchefstroom, South-Africa)
"Liminality in Sylvia Plath's Ariel and Ingrid Jonker's Rook en oker (Smoke and Ochre)".

11.20-12.30 Administrative matters (speakers)

12.30-14.00 LUNCH

14.10-15.20 Roberta Quance and Richard O'Rawe, The Queen's University, Belfast (UK)
"Mysticism and Liminality in Remedios Varo".

15.20-16.30 Ineke Bockting, Institut Catholique (France)
"Immigrant Liminality: The Case of Vladimir Nabokov and His Lolita or the Velvety Victim in the Dungeon".

16.30-17.30 Esteban Pujals, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain)
"Subject to clinamen: John Milton, Richard Bentley and the 'phantom editor' of *Paradise Lost*".

17.30 Seminar closure

"Tapas" evening