

# Thinking World Literature from Lusophone Perspectives Introduction

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World literature has re-emerged recently as central to reflections on the state of comparative literature as a discipline. In these debates, perspectives from the Lusophone world are often marginalized, ignored, or forgotten, despite the fact that the place of these countries and their literatures in a world sphere has been a subject of critical analysis since at least the 1960s. As Antonio Candido pointed out, the study of Brazilian literature is inextricable from examining its relationships to other literary traditions. The concept of world literature has continued to invigorate and problematize studies of the production, circulation, translation, and reception of Luso-Afro-Brazilian literary works. By considering how social, political, and economic power dynamics influence linguistic, literary, and cultural exchanges, Roberto Schwarz, Silviano Santiago, and Paulo de Medeiros, among others, have proposed interventions into debates on World Literature from a Luso-Afro-Brazilian perspective. Schwarz's concept of "misplaced ideas" has been recuperated in Franco Moretti's discussion of international literary exchange. Santiago's study of Joaquim Nabuco's cosmopolitanism as an attraction for the world informs Mariano Siskind's conceptualization of a Latin American "desire for the world." As part of the Warwick Research Collective, Medeiros has contributed examples from Portugal and its former colonies in Africa to the group's definition of world literature as the literature of the modern capitalist world-system and, thus, combined and uneven.

These critics exemplify how scholars from Brazil, Portugal, and other countries with Portuguese as an official or commonly spoken language, as well as those studying these literatures and cultures, offer original approaches to world

literature that differ significantly from its theorization in Anglo-American, Francophone, and Germanic contexts. By analyzing how Lusophone literary works and cultural criticism respond to and engage with world literature, this dossier aims to unsettle existing approaches to world literature and to recognize how writers and critics from various parts of the Portuguese-speaking world contribute to these conceptual and disciplinary debates. The seven articles that comprise this issue contribute to these critical conversations by examining intersections between Luso-Afro-Brazilian literary studies and world literature from distinct geographic, historical, and theoretical perspectives. Collectively, they expand upon existing edited volumes *América Latina en la "literatura mundial"* (2006) and *Brazilian Literature as World Literature* (2018) by reframing the spatial and linguistic focus from Latin America and Brazil, to the Lusophone world, broadly conceived. We also realize the limitations of defining our corpus around the Portuguese language, given that its continued presence in the Americas, Africa, and Asia resulted from its earlier implementation as an instrument of colonial and imperial power. Experiences of domination, subjugation, enslavement, and forced displacement are intrinsic to the history of Portuguese as a global language. In thinking about world literature from Lusophone perspectives, we recognize that, although Portuguese is an official language of these countries, it is not the sole language. Indigenous, Creole, and migrant languages and cultures also shape literary traditions and practices.

Approaching concepts of world literature from the perspective of Luso-Afro-Brazilian writers and thinkers invites us to reconsider relations between center and periphery by tracing networks, exchanges, and circuits within the transatlantic Lusophone world and the hemispheric Americas. Denis Leandro Francisco's study of *Granta em língua portuguesa* examines patterns of literary circulation within the Portuguese-language community to consider the place of Lusophone works in a broader global literary market. By featuring relatively well-known authors from Brazil, Portugal, and Angola, the Portuguese-language edition of *Granta* exemplifies the possibilities and limitations of framing Lusophone literatures as world literature. Thayse Lima offers another approach to literary magazines with her comparative analysis of *Mundo Nuevo* and *Cadernos Brasileiros* as Latin American publications offering distinct forms of transnational exchange during the Cold War. Lima invites us to consider how dialogues across languages between Brazil and Spanish America, while seeming to challenge center-periphery dynamics, are often triangulated through centers of

cultural and political capital in the United States or Europe. The Cold War shaped the literary and publishing landscape during the second half of the twentieth century, as Frans Weiser examines by reading José Agrippino de Paula's experimental novel *PanAmérica* and long-unpublished play *As Nações Unidas* in connection to Brazilian counterculture, hemispheric politics, and globalization. Weiser reevaluates Agrippino's corpus and its political stakes by underscoring the performative elements in both works.

Examining Luso-Afro-Brazilian literatures in relation to debates of World Literature beyond the Eurocentric concepts of the "world" invites sustained dialogue with critical frameworks of the Global South, the planetary, and the anthropocene. Lanie Millar's article on Manuel Rui's *Memória de Mar* offers a reading of postcolonial Angolan literature in connection to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's ideas of language and politics in *Globalectics*. Her study interrogates how legacies of Portuguese colonialism and its linguistic imperialism shape Rui's novella and the very concept of Lusophone African literature. While Millar posits a South-South comparison grounded in Africa, Krista Brune invites a shift in analytical focus to include Indigenous perspectives by examining ideas of translation and world literature in connection to Brazilian literature and Amerindian thought. Her reading of *Macunaíma* in dialogue with the ideas of anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro opens up another avenue for conceiving of the worlds at stake in these literary works.

The pieces of Marcelo Lotufo and Odile Cisneros return to key figures in Brazilian literature, José de Alencar, Machado de Assis, and Haroldo de Campos, to reconsider their global receptions and circulations. Reading these writers as distinctly Brazilian, yet evidently worldly, challenges binaries of the local and the global, or the particular and the cosmopolitan, in order to question the hierarchies and anxieties of influence and imitation that have long defined Brazil's place in literary circuits. Lotufo examines the trajectory of Alencar's work in translation in Italy, France, and England in order to consider why Machado's masterpieces did not benefit from similarly contemporaneous translations. His study interrogates how narratives of travel and desires for the exotic generated a market for Indianism that affected the disparate circulation of these Brazilian writers in nineteenth-century Europe. Cisneros turns her attention to the avant-garde poetics of Campos, specifically his final published book *Crisantempo*, which she reads as an example of a postmodern global poetics. Her analysis teases out connections between the mid-twentieth-century interventions

of the Noigandres group and later experimentations of Haroldo de Campos, thus situating his work between Brazil and the world.

Thinking of Lusophone writers in connection to world literature, we would be remiss to ignore the importance of José Saramago as the only writer in the Portuguese language to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. This dearth of Nobel laureates among Lusophone writers raises further questions about the circulation of literary texts in Portuguese within global spheres. In this issue, we consider how translation, transnational mediation, critical reception, and related biases affect international circulation and consecration. Such recognition, however, is not a prerequisite to offering insights into and reconsiderations of the concept of world literature, as writers like Manuel Rui and José Agrippino de Paula, among others, suggest. With this dossier, we aim to initiate an ongoing conversation about Luso-Afro-Brazilian literature and/as world literature. These seven articles offer interventions from distinct stylistic, historic, and cultural perspectives, but they are far from the definitive statement on this field. We invite you to begin this conversation with us and to continue to think, and rethink, world literature from various Lusophone perspectives.