



ABIL-
Lusitanists

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Call for papers:

‘Luso-Ecologies: More-Than-Human Complexity, Agency and Resistance in the Portuguese-Speaking Anthropocene’

Symposium date: 30th-31st March 2023

Expressions of interest are invited for participation in a two-day symposium to take place in March 2023 at the University of Oxford, leading to the publication of an edited collection on ‘Luso-Ecologies’ in the following year. This aims to be the decisive first step in a collaborative research project locating environmental studies and ecocriticism firmly within the scope of Lusophone Studies and Modern Languages research more generally.

In response to the interrelated anthropogenic crises of climate change, environmental collapse and biodiversity loss, the time is apt for an in-depth consideration of the unique contributions made by Lusophone cultures towards raising and addressing ecological questions.

We seek to foster discussion among the Lusophone scholarly community about animal, plant and other more-than-human complexities, agencies, resistance and materialities in Portuguese-speaking works – ranging from literary and philosophical texts to films and television, the visual arts, activist projects, and beyond. We are particularly eager to foster discussions across the Lusophone World, connecting Brazil, Portuguese-speaking Africa, Portugal and various Lusophone spaces in Asia. Comparative perspectives connecting and contrasting Lusophone texts, artefacts, and performances with other languages and geographical entities are also encouraged.

From Fernando Pessoa’s realisation, writing as Alberto Caeiro, that “a natureza é partes sem um todo,” and Clarice Lispector’s cockroachian communion, to Tamikuã Txihi’s feline embodiments of hope and memory, João Pedro Rodrigues’ avian gaze, and spectral canine presences in *Pepetela*, the Lusophone world is full of thorninesses and insights into the more-than-human world that demand examination. Taking inspiration from Adrienne Rich’s feminist notion of “re-vision,” which involves “entering an old text from a new critical direction” as nothing less than “an act of survival” (2001: 11), our symposium seeks to foster an equivalent *ecological* mode of re-reading canonical texts from the Portuguese-speaking world. This fresh focus on the more-than-human may help us in unlearning the anthropocentric assumptions in which we are steeped, as we also uncover repressed lessons in ecology. At the same time, we await the joyful surprise of encountering new, ecologically-minded, non-canonical texts, projects and creative resources from the Lusophone world which our symposium participants may bring to light.

Amongst other topics, the Luso-Ecologies symposium will engage thoroughly with the legacies of Portuguese slavery and imperialism – particularly the repression and resistance of animist and indigenous worldviews from Brazil and Portuguese-speaking Africa, and how these processes shaped representations, reflexions and narratives on more-than-human elements in the Portuguese-speaking world. As an early colonial power, which instrumentalised its ocean-facing geographical position at the periphery of Europe to legitimise its imperial ambitions, Portugal has played a major role in the global advent of the plantationocene. Starting with islands off the European and African coasts, the Portuguese were key in establishing plantation systems sustained by forced labour, a model of capitalist growth that they would then successfully export in the New World, and which would inspire other colonial powers such as Spain, the Netherlands, Britain and France. The links between slavery, colonialism and environmental disasters and degradation are just starting to be thoroughly explored by academics from the Global North, although previously silenced voices from the Global South have long denounced ecocide as one of the most destructive aspects of slavery and colonialism. Environmental destruction was actively encouraged by a Western worldview that Malcom Ferdinand has named a “colonial inhabiting of the Earth” (2019: 298) that was and remains fundamentally extractivist, seeing more-than-human elements as readily available, inanimate objects that can be destroyed, exploited and dominated for colonial and imperial interests.

Applicants to our symposium may look at ways in which Lusophone cultures engage with any ecological imperative, including but not limited to:

- Re-conceptualising human beings’ relationship with the more-than-human world.
- Dismantling the conceptual cages in which all animals, including humans, are confined;
- Disrupting the human/animal, human/plant and human/nonhuman divides;
- Resisting homogenisation by depicting more-than-human complexities;
- Thinking and feeling dis-anthropocentrically;
- Investigating the polyvocality of the world (this may involve showing how artists, thinkers and activists listen to the expressivity of the more-than-human as an active agent in its own right);
- Addressing the ecological impacts of Portuguese imperialism;
- Acknowledging, shaping and echoing African and Indigenous epistemologies, worldviews and knowledge, offering alternative visions and ontologies of living.

We are particularly eager to hear from early-career researchers and postgraduate students, and have secured funding from ABIL (the Association of British and Irish Lusitanists) and the Leverhulme Trust to cover U.K.-based delegates’ transport to and accommodation in Oxford. This will be a fully hybrid symposium, and we are keen to encourage online participation from outside the U.K., expanding access to scholars from around the globe while minimising the event’s carbon footprint. In the same vein, yet equally as an ethical gesture, all catering for in-person attendees will be vegan.

Expressions of interest, in the form of a title, a summary (250-500 words) and a short biography (100 words) should be sent to lusoecologies@gmail.com by 30th November 2022. We are also available for answering any queries at this e-mail address. Participants to the symposium are expected to give 15-20 minute presentations, in English or Portuguese, which then have the potential to be transformed into chapters for the edited collection *Luso-Ecologies*. Please indicate, in your email, whether you wish to present remotely or in-person.

NB. To increase the possibilities of meaningful engagement and constructive feedback from the convenors and other participants, selected participants will be asked to produce fuller, 1,000-word summaries of their presentations for circulation in February 2023, in advance of the symposium in March.

Symposium convenors:

Dorothee Boulanger, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow and Junior Research Fellow at Jesus College, University of Oxford

<https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/people/dorothee-boulanger>

Andrzej Stuart-Thompson, DPhil Student at Jesus College, University of Oxford

<https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/people/andrzej-stuart-thompson>

Suggested reading:

Stacey Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as a Feminist Space* (London: Cornell University Press, 2000).

Karen Barad, 'Nature's Queer Performativity', *Qui parle*, 19 (2011), 121-58.

Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

Eric C. Brown (ed), *Insect Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

Leigh Brownhill et al. (eds), *The Routledge Handbook on Ecosocialism* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).

Lawrence Buell, 'Ecocriticism: Some Emerging Trends', *Qui parle*, 19 (2011), 87-115.

Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser (eds), *A World of Many Worlds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

Matthew Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals: Identity, Difference, Indistinction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

— (ed.), *Animal Studies: The Key Concepts* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2021).

Mel Y Chen and Dana Luciano (eds), 'Queer Inhumanisms', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 21. 2-3 (2015).

Josephine Donovan, *The Aesthetics of Care: On the Literary Treatment of Animals* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

Monica Gagliano, John C. Ryan, and Patricia Vieira, *The Language of Plants: Science, Philosophy, Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

Malcom Ferdinand, *Une Écologie Décoloniale: Penser L'écologie Depuis Le Monde Caribéen* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2019).

Malcom Ferdinand, *A Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World, Critical South* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021).

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Amitav Ghosh, *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* (London: John Murray Publishers, 2022).

Lori Gruen (ed.), *Critical Terms for Animal Studies* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).

Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

- Isabel Hofmeyr, Sarah Nuttall, and Charne Lavery, 'Reading for Water', *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 24 (2022), 303-22.
- Graham Huggan, and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. Second edn (London: Routledge, 2015).
- Cajetan Iheka, *Naturalizing Africa: Ecological Violence, Agency, and Postcolonial Resistance in African Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 211.
- Luce Irigaray and Michael Marder, *Through Vegetal Being: Two Philosophical Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
- Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiracist World* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).
- Inge Konik, 'Ubuntu and Ecofeminism: Value-Building with African and Womanist Voices', *Environmental Values*, 27 (2018), pp269-88.
- Ailton Krenak, *Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2019).
- , *A vida não é útil: ideias para salvar a humanidade* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2020).
- Eduardo Leão, 'Suicidal Cows and Fields of Worms: Apocalyptic Agribusiness in Brazil and Argentina', *Journal of Lusophone Studies*, 7 (2022), 144-67.
- Michael Löwy, *Ecosocialism: A Radical Alternative to Capitalist Catastrophe* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2015).
- Patricia MacCormack, *Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2016).
- Michael Marder, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).
- , *The Philosopher's Plant: An Intellectual Herbarium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
- Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983).
- Victor K. Mendes, and Patricia I. Vieira, *Portuguese Literature and the Environment* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019).
- Catriona Mortimer Sandilands and Bruce Erikson (eds). *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).
- Evan Mwangi, *The Postcolonial Animal: African Literature and Posthuman Ethics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019).
- Anat Pick, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
- Luis Prádanos, and Mark Anderson, 'Transatlantic Iberian, Latin American, and Lusophone African Ecocriticism: An Introduction // Ecocrítica Transatlántica Ibérica, Latinoamericana Y Lusófono-Africana: Una Introducción', *Ecozon@*, 8 (2017), 1-21
- Adrienne Rich, "'When We Dead Awaken": Writing as Re-Vision', in *Arts of the Possible: Essays and Conversations* (New York; London: W.W.Norton & Company, 2001), 10-29.
- Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2013).
- Farhana Sultana, 'The Unbearable Heaviness of Climate Coloniality', *Political Geography* (2022).
- Louise du Toit, 'The African Animal Other: Decolonizing Nature', *Angelaki*, 24 (2019), 130-42.
- Plumwood Val, 'Nature in the Active Voice', *Australian humanities review* (2009), 111-27.
- Patrícia Vieira, 'Rainforest Sublime in Cinema: A Post-Anthropocentric Amazonian Aesthetics', *Hispania*, 103 (2020), 533-44.
- , *States of Grace: Utopia in Brazilian Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2018).