



Congresso Internacional:
SARAMAGO E O TRANSIBERISMO
UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA,
MARÇO DE 2022.

In 2022, the centenary year of José Saramago's birth, we have the unique opportunity to revisit a work of worldwide projection and a thought that, by signaling the impasses and challenges of yesterday and today, remains current and has an unmistakable interdisciplinary vocation. Throughout 2022, the cycle of Itinerant Conferences-Centenary of José Saramago I Write to Understand will be held in Barcelona, Sofia, Vigo and Rome, which host the José Saramago Cathedra. In it, we will discuss the strengths of the writing and the worldview of the author of *Blindness*.

Seeking to promote exchanges that transcend the closed approach provided by certain academic literature or mere ritual celebration, the José Saramago Chatedra at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona is promoting a dialogue around iberism, one of the debates (re)opened by Saramago, and its necessary bonds with the reflections produced by post-colonial and decolonial studies. The author's reflections and his representation as a committed intellectual are decisive for the change of paradigms operated at the end of the last millennium, especially in what concerns poetics and politics about difference and identities, inviting us to articulate them, in this way, with the ongoing cultural reflection and political debate. In fact, two of the speakers at this congress, Maria Paula Meneses and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, authors of *"Epistemologies of the South"*, a theoretical perspective that, in many aspects, dialogues with Saramago's postulates, and open, from an interdisciplinary perspective, a set of paths that are crucial for the exercise of listening to other rationalities. Related to this issue, the more directly political debate, associated with the figure of Saramago, will not be disregarded.

José Saramago's approach to Iberianism takes shape progressively after the publication of the novel *The Stone Raft*, precisely in the context of Portugal and Spain's incorporation into the European Economic Community. According to the writer, the Iberian Peninsula cannot be interpreted outside its historical relations and, as such, must maintain a constant link with Latin America, Africa and the other territories where was and still an Iberian cultural presence. It is not just a matter of understanding the diversity within the Peninsula and the "polymorphic socio-historical-cultural constellation" that is Spain, according to the author, nor the harmonization of its interests; the utopia of transiberism to which Saramago aspired requires a continuous critical exercise about the path undertaken by colonial expansion, for a broad understanding of Iberian cultural identities, thus contemplating responsibilities of a political and cultural character. It is therefore imperative that we abandon a generalized historical view in order to arrive at a dynamic appreciation of differences, favoring effective exchanges that contribute to the intensification of knowledge. In this way, we would not get lost in the lure of an officialist and emptied rhetoric, as happened so many times in the past, responsible for new misunderstandings that would add to and aggravate the old ones (Saramago, 1990). The concept of transiberism fills the gap that, according to postcolonial studies, represents the great cultural problem of the West today: the need to establish a rational and humanitarian



dialogue with cultures that, during and after modern colonization, assumed the capacity to combine social criticism and defense of their identities.

The debate around Saramago's transiberism and the multiple developments it is capable of inspiring will take place in Barcelona between March 9 and 13. As previously mentioned, it will feature lectures by Professor Maria Paula Meneses (University of Coimbra Centre for Social Studies) and Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos (University of Coimbra Centre for Social Studies and University of Wisconsin-Madison).

Below is a list of some of the axes that will be worked on during the Barcelona Congress

- transiberism in José Saramago's fiction: forms and functions;
- the impact of José Saramago's transiberism on social sciences and humanities;
- transiberism and its relation to postcolonial and decolonial studies;
- dialogues between "southern epistemologies" and transiberism: pact with differences and identities in flux.
- Saramago's proposal and its importance for the reading of the political present in the Iberian Peninsula and Europe;
- Africa(s) and Ibero-America(s) focused through the lens of transiberism;
- transiberism focused through the African and Ibero-American lenses;
- transiberism and translation theory: necessary betrayals and reinventions;
- the place of transiberism in contemporary times: impasses and possible horizons.

The paper proposals, containing between 200 and 400 words, with the title, author's name and institutional affiliation, should be sent until October 1st, 2021 to the following e-mail address: **saramago.barcelona@gmail.com**

We will contact the authors of the selected proposals until November 1st 2021.

The papers that stand out during the congress will be published, after the usual peer review, in the journal **Abriu - estudos de textualidade do Brasil, Galicia e Portugal** (<https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/Abriu>).

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