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Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Phelps Hall 4206 | 93106, CA

Title

Reassessing Academia Second Series, Vol. 2, 2023

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Periodicity

Annual

ISSN

2693-9231

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REASSESSING ACADEMIA

Second Series, Vol. 2, 2023

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Foreword

This issue of *Tinta Journal* features the full papers presented by panelists at the XXI Hispanic and Lusophone Conference, 'Reassessing Academia: Approaches to a More Inclusive and Equitable University.' Hosted by graduate students from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UC Santa Barbara on April 27th and 28th, 2023, the conference marked a significant milestone as the first in-person occurrence since the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the two days, a diverse group of graduate students, researchers, and teachers convened both in person and remotely to explore avenues towards fostering a more inclusive and diverse academia.

The compilation of articles and essays within this volume, titled **Reassessing Academia**, brings the results of our collaborators' research developed in prestigious institutions in the United States and Brazil. The interdisciplinary approach of this issue reflects the interdisciplinarity required to create spaces for debates where previously silenced and underrepresented voices can claim their rightful "academic citizenship", as stated by Victoria Reyes in Academic Outsider: Stories of Exclusion and Hope (2022).

The twelve papers in this volume show originality and innovative insights on a diverse range of topics that intersect with critical debates on gender, race, and class. The cultural manifestations here analyzed span across Latin America, Iberia, and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. From discussions on sexuality in the 17th century to the use of literature to fight racism in elementary schools, each paper offers unique perspectives on the complexities of identity and power dynamics within diverse cultural contexts.

Arcadio Bolaños discusses Peru's challenge of achieving national coherence and inclusive representation, particularly concerning its indigenous communities, spanning from the 1980s to the present. Bolaños delves into literary, cinematic, and political realms, echoing broader themes of societal polarization and indigenous rights.

Alexia Chavira also draws from a sociological framework to investigate the entrenched cultural norms that perpetuates gender hierarchy in Mozambique's post-independence era. Through Mozambican Cinema, Chavira examines not only Mozambican women's struggles and activism, but also their resilience in the face of adversity, exemplifying the intersectional struggles faced by marginalized communities worldwide.

Himanshi Arora explores female sexuality as integral to individual identity in María de Zayas' Desengaño quinto (1637-1647). Arora discusses the importance of Zayas' work in 17th-century Spain, transgressing the norms by representing eroticism as a tool for female agency and empowerment. Anti-patriarchal representation in the 17th century is also the topic in Yingyi Liang's paper. Liang analyzes gender dynamics through Pepetela's A gloriosa família (1997), a narrative that takes place during the Dutch occupation in Angola in the 1640s. From different perspectives, these characters analyzed in these two papers further enrich our understanding of historical power structures and the evolving roles of women who defy patriarchal norms.

Daniela Siqueira explores the satirical Recordações do Escrivão Isaías Caminha (1909), by Lima Barreto, to shed light on the impact of interpersonal relationships as criteria for literary canonization. Siqueira defends that the social ties of friendship or animosity amongst intellectuals impose obstacles beyond aesthetic or literary affiliation. Jakob Romine explores the role of popular music in shaping Angolan identity during the conflict leading to independence in 1975, drawing parallels with the music of the US Civil Rights Movement. By analyzing music's significance in both Angolan and American movements, Romine highlights music as a potent tool for expression and cultural identity, capable of uniting people and inspiring social change, especially in contexts of oppression and uncertainty.

Marcela A. Azevedo proposes a critical analysis of the short story "George" by Portuguese contemporary author Maria Judite de Carvalho. Azevedo explores how this story portrays contemporary women's solitude in 20th-century Portuguese literature,

representing a character who navigates a journey toward self-discovery and liberation. Marco A. Correa, Marcelha Q. Pereira, and Nayara B. Cruz discuss the significance of literature in shaping the Black identity of children in a public elementary school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The coauthors show an activity conducted in class using bell hooks' Meu crespo é de rainha [Happy to be nappy, 1999] where the children shared their experience with racism. The antiracist pedagogical approach of this paper emphasizes the urgency of racial discussions in schools, fostering an anti-racist environment where differences are celebrated.

Pedro Pereira proposes a comparative study between *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville, and *Fausto* by Fernando Pessoa. Pereira's analysis highlights the concept of Atlanticism, facilitating intertextual readings in which the two works, by sharing a disruptive formal quality, mask a transcendent message. Isabela Pinheiro explores the theme of desire as depicted in the characters Luísa and Leopoldina in Eça de Queirós' *O Primo Basílio* (1878). Pinheiro examines how societal norms, particularly influenced by Christian doctrines, constrained female behavior, limiting their ability to act on their desires, especially sexual ones in 19th-century Portuguese literature.

Gabriela Azevedo examines the influence of non-canonical literary manifestations in redefining established archetypes. Azevedo explores the classical figure of Circe, from Homer's myth, as depicted in Madeline Miller's contemporary novel, assessing the impact of Miller's portrayal on the image of Circe and, by extension, canonical literature, utilizing a review by a non-professional reader. Finally, Danielle Leal focuses on the novels O crime do Cais do Valongo e Água de Barrela, by Eliana Alves Cruz, a prominent Black writer in contemporary Brazilian literature. Leal demonstrates how these narratives offer decentralized perspectives, revealing the stories of diasporic Black individuals from marginalized communities through themes such as memory, ancestry, and religiosity, challenging stereotypes surrounding slavery and its aftermath.

The papers presented in this volume underscore the importance of diverse narratives in challenging dominant discourses and fostering inclusive spaces within educational settings. Together, these papers invite readers to embark on a journey of critical inquiry and introspection aiming at the transformative potential of culture in challenging systemic injustices. It is our hope that this collection will inspire further dialogue and action towards realizing a truly diverse and representative academia.

I would like to thank our Faculty Advisor, Professor Antonio Cortijo, whose guidance helps the graduate students in our Department to achieve academic excellence. We also want to recognize and thank the invaluable insights from our current board faculty members: André Corrêa de Sá, Antonio Cortijo, Aline Ferreira, Juan Pablo Lupi, Laura Marqués-Pascual, and Élide Valarini Oliver. We are deeply grateful for their time and work. Many thanks to Professor Élide Valarini Oliver, the chair of our department, for her support and availability. I am also deeply grateful for the assistants to the editor—Carrollyn Aasen, Ana Marqués García, Carina Paredes Rivera, and Jacob Romine—who have helped me with the edition of this issue.

The Editor in Chief,
Aline de Almeida