

Silva, Daniel F. and Lamonte Aidoo, Eds. *Lusophone African Short Stories and Poetry after Independence: Decolonial Destinies*. Anthem Press, 2021. 368 pp. ISBN:9781785276194

Published recently (2021), Daniel F. Silva and Lamonte Aidoo's *Lusophone African Short Stories and Poetry after Independence: Decolonial Destinies*, broadens the scope and audience of the Lusophone African literary world by bringing to light canonical, emerging, and previously untranslated authors to a new public. It is the first volume of its kind to introduce Lusophone African literatures to a broad Anglophone audience, academic or otherwise, only preceded by the ground-breaking project by Russell Hamilton titled *Voices from an Empire: A History of Afro-Portuguese Literature* (Minnesota University Press, 1975), and the edited encyclopedic volume *The Postcolonial Literature of Lusophone Africa* (Northwestern University Press, 1996) by Patrick Chabal. Hamilton's book was published the year of independence of most Lusophone African nations, specifically Angola, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, and São Tomé e Príncipe (Guinea-Bissau having declared independence in 1973), and Chabal's twenty years later. Since then, there's been a vacuum regarding this type of long breath translation and compilatory works.

These two previously mentioned book-length projects have studied and critically addressed Lusophone African literature with a broad and diverse view. They have as well discussed the formation of national literatures across genres and located points of convergence while highlighting the singularities of each author, work, and country. Chabal's volume contains five chapters, each dedicated to one national literature, its emergence, and major aesthetic trends. *Lusophone African Short Stories and Poetry after Independence: Decolonial Destinies*, however, sets itself apart from these previous volumes by being the first anthology of writers from Lusophone Africa to be published in English. While those are important analytical savvy projects in literary criticism, they do not offer readers direct access to the important literary works they discuss. Furthermore, because of their breadth, covering different authors and some of their works through brief vignettes, they do not provide the opportunity for in-depth exposure to each important work. As academic and literary critics of Lusophone Africa are well aware, only a select and limited number of important works, mainly novels, from a few of the most acclaimed Lusophone African authors have been translated into English. These include some of the novels from authors such as Paulina Chiziane and Mia Couto of Mozambique, José Eduardo Agualusa and Pepetela of Angola, and Germano Almeida of Cabo Verde. This small portion of availability in English is problematically limited by country (dominated especially by Angolan and Mozambican writers), and thematics often informed by the privileged gazes of its authors, mostly white male writers of Portuguese descent. Similarly, important and impactful works of Bissau-Guinean, São Toméan, and (to lesser extent), Cape Verdean writers have been largely ignored. The translation and circulation of Lusophone African literature has also been limited almost exclusively to novels, overlooking and discounting the robust works of poetry, short stories, and drama.

One of the particular objectives of Silva's and Aidoo's volume is to counter the system of marginalization that determines the publication and circulation of literary works from Lusophone Africa. *Lusophone African Short Stories and Poetry after Independence: Decolonial Destinies* will thus offer readers, students, and scholars a more diverse and broad spectrum of literary voices from Lusophone Africa that have addressed the legacies of colonialism and the challenges of post-independence life in the era of neocolonialism. Bringing together the works of poets, short story

writers, and journalists, this book charts the emergence and evolution of the national literatures of Portugal's former African colonies, from 1975 to the present. The anthology is divided in five parts, after an extensive introduction that delves into the Portuguese colonization of Africa, one each dedicated to the translations of the literary works of authors from the five Portuguese ex-African colonies. The book also offers an informative introduction of the authors included in the volume. We can find names such as Ana Paula Tavares, Ana de Santana, Amélia da Lomba, Vera Duarte Pina, Domingas Samy, Odete Semedo, Paulina Chiziane, Tânia Tomé, Alda Espírito Santo, Olinda Beja, just to name a few women authors who deserve further academic attention.

Moreover, the book examines, through its historically informative and theoretically nuanced introduction, the ways in which writers contended with the process of decolonization, forging national, transnational, and diasporic identities through literature while grappling with the legacies and continuities of racial power structures, colonial systems of representation, and the struggles for political sovereignty and social justice.

This is thus a unique book. It is the first to gather writers from five African nations who, to a great extent, have not been given due attention inside or outside the field of Lusophone African Studies. These new voices, now translated into English, will not only decenter common ideas of the legacies of Portuguese colonialism and the post-independence of the country's former colonies, but will also bring new voices to the literary (and, by extension, political) debate in and about Lusophone Africa. *Decolonial Destinies* is definitely an original and useful contribution that yields very much needed new ways of thinking colonialism and post-coloniality. Although *Decolonial Destinies* does not aim toward the impossible goal of providing a holistic understanding of Lusophone African literatures, it will offer readers substantial passages, and in some cases, complete works of a broad range of writers from the last five decades accompanied by critical introductions that consider the works in question in terms of their contestations toward the political, racial, and cultural tenets of Empire.

Lusophone African Short Stories and Poetry after Independence: Decolonial Destinies makes for a delightful and invigorating reading for all of those who are interested in Portuguese colonial Africa and the emergence and the evolution of the national literatures of Portugal's former African colonies. This book will be a vital resource for scholars and students at all levels, ranging from established researchers to undergraduate students interested in matters pertaining to race in the contexts of empire, slavery, nationhood, and diaspora.

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