



Phyllis Peres, Inc. NetLibrary. *Transculturation and resistance in Lusophone African narrative.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. x + 131 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-2368-7.

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Examining Angolan Fiction

Although Phyllis Peres doesn't mention it, this work is an update of *National Literary Identity in Contemporary Angolan Prose Fiction*, the fine dissertation she wrote at the University of Minnesota (1986) as Phyllis A. Reisman.

Peres begins by examining the history and context of Angolan writing, noting the importance of events from early colonial history and the assimilation policies of the Portuguese to Lusotropicalismo and the Generation of 1950. All this leads Peres to defining transculturation, an anthropological concept she has adopted as a theoretical framework for examining the process and product of Angolan literature. Transculturation marks a movement toward a national culture or a national literary identity and works as a means of resisting colonial acculturation.

Peres devotes a chapter to each of four major Angolan writers who face these issues in their works, namely, Luandino Vieira, Uanhenga Xitu, Pepetela and Manuel Rui. In "Countermapping Luanda," we learn of Vieira's use of hybrid language and genres, while in "Mimicry in the Contact Zone," Peres outlines Xitu's "subversive strategies of mimicry and farce" (47). Vieira and Xitu wrote many of their influential works during the years of the struggle for independence. "Visions of Utopia, Counternarrations of Nation" focuses on the idea of nation and nationhood as manifested in the works of the playwright and novelist Pepetela. In "After the Revolution," Peres discusses the post-independence works of Rui and the continued efforts to define nation in the post-colonial

era.

Throughout, Peres offers strong evidence from the text for her thesis, and provides insightful analysis of those textual examples. Peres has been able to meet and consult with all four of the authors she studies, a fact which greatly enriches her insights into a number of works and issues. Peres concludes by reminding us that Angolan writing is different than other post-colonial African writing, pointing to Angola's prolonged fight for independence and the brutal civil war, which has comprised most of its post-colonial years. Peres states that "for all the common ground that one can find in post-colonial African narratives, Angolan writers stand somewhat apart in that their imaginings of nation always raised the possibilities of a dream deferred by divisions of class, ethnicity, race, political alliances and regionalisms" (104).

Peres' work on Angolan literature is certainly a strong contribution to Lusophone African literary studies, especially given the limited number of resources available in English. It should be noted, though, that the title may mislead some readers. Those who are looking for a survey of all Lusophone African literature may want to refer to Patrick Chabal's *The Postcolonial Literature of Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst, 1996), or to Russell G. Hamilton's *Voices from an Empire: A History of Afro-Portuguese Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975).

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