

# Instituto Maria e João Aleixo | International University of the Peripheries

## DEMOCRACY AND THE PERIPHERY

The contemporary world has witnessed the rise of a new wave of authoritarianism. The threat to democracy takes hold in the contours surrounding our democratic institutions and values, questioning them from a conservative and even regressive political lens. Progressive forces have proved themselves unable to organize a cohesive discourse and strategy to confront the erosion of democratic values. In effect, aggressive conservative speech and action mounted its own political response to questions of inequality. In the absence of viable alternatives, this policy and rhetoric thrived. The advances made by the social movements of the peripheries such as the Women Movements, Black Movements, LGBTQ+ Movements, and Cultural Movements of the Peripheries have reinvented political engagement, surpassing the agenda of the traditional political left.

The renovation of social movements, and with it the emergence of other individual and collective political subjects, stood at the cusp of achieving major advances during the mandates of local and national progressive governments. This renovation came about through the incorporation and inclusion of diverse and plural identities, creating opportunities for a qualitative redefining of the meaning of democracy.

The crisis of capitalism and neoliberalism in its most recent form did not allow such advances to gain the resonance necessary to break with conservative discourse. With the onset of economic and political crises, the return of conservatism became the path of choice for dominant groups in their re-conquest and recomposition of sociocultural hegemony, providing ideological support for the predatory expansion of capital. Our greatest threat comes not from the progression of conservative forces, but from the resurgent disregard for democracy as a system capable of providing for complete human rights.

The present edition of PERIPHERIES proposes to contemplate the challenges for democracy in the contemporary world. The Journal proposes to address this question from the perspectives and lives of the world's peripheries. While democracy faces a real threat amid

the expansion of countless anti-democratic conservative fronts around the world, we must remember that the effects of these elements are even more devastating for those territories and populations that have not yet consolidated their access to basic rights.

The affirmative analysis of emerging struggles among diverse territories, and likewise the strategies employed by peripheral groups, are fundamental. They also form part of a broad search for alternatives the peripheries can offer in rethinking the meaning of contemporary democracy. This includes the need to create aesthetic narratives and political action to sustain the preservation and consolidation of democracy. This re-thinking will affect not only the periphery, but the entire contemporary world. New responses must come from the periphery and its inventive power.

## **EDITION #2**

PERIPHERIES Journal, a bi-annual and four language (PT - ENG - ES - FR) publication of the Instituto Maria e João Aleixo (IMJA), completes, with its edition on Democracy and the Periphery, its first year of publication. In total, this issue contains nineteen different works grouped into six sections: *Articles*, *Narratives*, *Interviews*, *“Born of the Periphery,”* *Reviews*, and *PERIPHERIES Features*.

## **INTERVIEWS AND ARTICLES**

The Brazilian author Conceição Evaristo and European Parliament Member Marisa Matias feature prominently in our Interviews section of the current edition. In Articles, Raja Bagga and Madhurima Dhanuka (India) discuss the challenges for prison reform and democracy; Abdullah Yusuf (Pakistan) addresses possibilities and challenges for the current Prime Minister; Levent Piskin (Turkey) analyzes his country’s contemporary authoritarianism in historical perspective; Paula Flanagan (Ireland) takes on the question of neoliberalism and community practices; and Albert Ogien (France), proposes an expansion of the concept of the periphery. Eduardo Alves leads with the IMJA’s official opening statement.

## **NARRATIVES, “BORN OF THE PERIPHERY,” AND REVIEWS**

Marked by a plurality of Narratives, the Journal opens with Mapuche Intervention - Obra 18.314 (Chile) by Daniela Catrileo, an artistic, poetic, and photographic intervention merged with dialogue between the co-authors. In Romani Narrative (Spain), Pastora Filigrana, Sonia Sahli and Natalia Caballo bring the Roma perspective from Seville periphery. In Body in a Bundle, Shahd Wadi takes on a testimonial tone to describe the idea of body and belonging in Palestine. Alejandro "Pitu" Salvatierra from Buenos Aires' Villa 15 talks education and community in "Born and Raised in the Peripheries." Bira Carvalho, photographer from the Imagens do Povo course, a project of the Observatório de Favelas, demonstrates his photographic essay in this edition as well. In a dialogue between a theologian and a transsexual woman from the periphery, Gilmara Cunha and Graham McGeoch discuss the body, transsexuality, visibility, and politics. Jorge Barbosa reviews the book "Geopolítica do estado nacional e o território Quilombola no século XXI," on the Quilombola legacy and its geopolitical repercussions. Last, Aiala Colares takes us to the neighborhood of Cabanagem in Belém, introducing us to the roots of the organization *Periferia em Foco*.

## FEATURED

Inaugurated in the current edition, PERIPHERIES Features showcases the work of: Redes da Maré and WOW the Women of the World Festival, Catalytic Communities, and Narra Agency.

## EDITION #3

The call for submissions to Edition #3 of PERIPHERIES, "Alternative Experiences in the Periphery," is now available. Submission deadline: March 2019.

\*\*\*