The UMD MA & PhD Program in Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory

The Department of Portuguese, in collaboration with the Departments of Art History, History, Political Science, Sociology/Anthropology, Teaching and Learning, and the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture, cordially invites you to a PhD dissertation defense

Machado de Assis on the Margins of the Nation: The Construction of Brazilian National Identity in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* by PhD Candidate Eufrida Pereira da Silva

Wednesday, May 2, 2012, 8:45 AM
LARTS 397D (A&S Dean’s Conference Room)

* This presentation will be in Portuguese.

Abstract. This dissertation aims to analyze the construction of both nation and national identity in Brazil in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the characters presented as marginal or minor in the works of Machado de Assis. Gaining its independence in 1822, Brazil supported the ideals of a monarchic empire in the tropics by adopting an ideal of Western civilization, and sought to “integrate” the nation and local “differences” according to a sense of uniformity and mission. From the 1870s on, racial theories in Brazil were overtaking the debate on citizenship and participation of the individual, producing a model of social exclusion. Drawing on Homi Bhabha’s concept of margin, Silva concludes that the ambivalence of the characters on the margins of the text exposes the falsity of the idealized representation of Brazil as a homogeneous and consensual nation.

Eufrida Pereira da Silva holds a Bachelor’s degree in Economics from Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie and a Masters in Communication Science from Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Brazil. After concluding her Masters in Portuguese in 2008, she is now ABD in the doctoral program in Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Her research is based on a multidisciplinary perspective in the humanities that combines the study of Brazilian literature with other relevant subject areas such as history, politics, economics, and anthropology. Specifically, her work focuses on Machado de Assis’s literary works with an emphasis on the reading of Brazil as an independent nation built within a history of social exclusion throughout the nineteenth century.

PhD Committee
Prof. Victor K. Mendes (adviser)
Prof. Dário Borim Jr.
Prof. Christopher Larkosh

Contact: Victor K. Mendes, vmendes@umassd.edu
Director, MA & PhD in Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory