ENSFR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022
LISBON, PORTUGAL

Short Fiction as World Literature

October 27-29
University of Lisbon
School of Arts and Humanities
Call for Papers

In *Death of a Discipline*, Gayatri Spivak mentions the problematic identification of “literature” with the novel form in comparative literature (2005: 123). Her concern with our general blindness to non-hegemonic forms recalls the consternation frequently shown in short fiction criticism toward the enduring novel-centrism of literary studies. This conference aims to bring together scholars with an interest in examining this tension and the different ways in which it may extend to the field of world literature. But our goal is not to look at the short form once again in stark opposition to the novel. Rather, we invite papers that interrogate the marginal spaces of short fiction from other angles and explore the underestimated potential of the short story as a cosmopolitan form, focusing on how it may tell an alternative history of literary circulation.

While brevity may well be an insufficient criterion to define the genre, it is, in the simplest sense, what makes the short story highly portable and translatable. With its ability to easily navigate distinct narrative registers, subgenres, styles, and literary traditions, the short story's inherently movable nature is reflected in the rapidity and abundance of its publication. It often circulates in both literary and non-specialized sources that are more volatile and transmissible than books: journals, pamphlets, academic and cultural periodicals, and, increasingly, digital outlets such as websites, blogs, online magazines, and social media. It is also typically faster to translate than longer forms like the novel, as well as arguably easier to translate than more semantically and structurally complex forms like poetry. The short story is widely translated and disseminated in anthologies that frequently aim to introduce their readers to lesser-known or previously untranslated works. Additionally, the short story is the object of frequent adaptations to cinema, television and other audiovisual media.

But the short story also travels through language(s) by other means. On one hand, it is a migrant or a traveling form even within its linguistic and geo-cultural world, often appearing in collections that promote the categories of Lusophone, Anglophone, or Francophone short story. On the other hand, its portability also means that short-story writers are often influenced by, and respond to, international peers and predecessors. In this sense, the modernist short story is an apt example of an intrinsically transnational genre in which the influences of Chekhov, Kafka, Mansfield, Borges, and others, cut across national boundaries. Looking into post-modern and contemporary fiction we also have to consider emerging and renewed forms of migrant writing, with an increasing number of multilingual authors writing in a second language and sometimes acting also as translators of their own work.
Considering the diversity that characterizes the many genres of short fiction, the topics we hope to explore in the ENSFR Conference of 2022 through the theme of “Short Fiction as World Literature” include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The short story in motion: translation, adaptation, circulation
- The history of short fiction in connection to literary and social change
- The short story as a portable form
- Intermedial and transmedial approaches to short fiction
- Intertextuality and the short story
- The short story as a global form
- Migration and the short story
- Reception theory and the reader’s response to short fiction
- Transnational styles and genres (e.g. novella, flash fiction, short story cycles)
- Multilingualism in short fiction and cross-cultural aesthetics
- The native, foreign, hegemonic, and peripheral languages of the short story
- Short fiction anthologies in world literature
- Creation and the short story: creative nonfiction, crossover fiction, multimedia storytelling

Proposals of about 300 words for presentations in English, Portuguese, or French, together with a short biographical note (50 words) should be sent to ensfrconference2022@gmail.com by June 3. We welcome interdisciplinary and creative presentations. Proposals from students and early-career researchers are especially encouraged.

A selection of articles based on papers from the conference will be published in Short Fiction in Theory and Practice and in Journal of the Short Story in English.

The 2022 ENSFR Conference will take place in-person at the University of Lisbon School of Arts and Humanities (Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa).

Organizers:
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