

Journal "Costellazioni" -- Call for papers (no. 31)

Volume title:

“Frameworks for Democracy: Literary and Theoretical Perspectives from Latin America”

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CFP:

This special issue begins, diachronically, with the problematic transfer of the concept of democracy to the new Latin American Republics, and reflects on the formation and practice of democratic institutions in the region. The hypothesis is the transcultural appropriation of this political concept displays an epistemic rupture between a European conception (as elaborated in the philosophical discourses of the classical tradition) and its transatlantic versions. Understanding democracy in the region requires an in-depth study of the difficulties encountered in the adaptation of the ideas and practices democracy to social and political formations across the region, as well as some consideration of the constitution of collective subjectivities in twentieth and twenty-first century Latin America. On the one hand, class, race and gender interests have undoubtedly guided the selective reception of these Enlightenment ideals; on the other hand, the complexities of (post)colonial realities have clearly surpassed classical theorizations. Today, in the context of decolonial theory, the concept and praxis of democracy in peripheral societies are being re-examined from new perspectives.

Since the 1960s, dictatorship – and its deconstruction through narrative – has dominated as a political form and literary theme in Latin America. This monographic issue aims, therefore, to explore the field of Latin American literature through an alternative theoretical approach: that of the construction of plural democratic worlds; of projects that propose alternatives to the dominant narrative of modernity/coloniality; of project that, together, point to the pluriverse. Drawing on case studies from across Latin America and with special attention on contexts of conflict, violence and/or repression, the aim is to explore how alternative political subjectivities have given rise to new literary and narrative forms that have contributed to the construction of political realities inspired by principles of communitarian and ecological coexistence intended to challenge European hegemony and open up new ways of being, living and *doing politics* in an era characterized by a global crisis of democracy. Case studies may include (the following examples are not exhaustive) the plural representations of the 1968 massacre in Mexico, the representation of femicide in contemporary Mexican and Argentine literatures, the development of new subjectivities through (albeit limited) access to the internet in Cuba, or the formation of unprecedented creative synergies between literature and music to circumvent regime censorship in Brazil.

The issue welcomes papers on the following themes:

- Relationship between literature and nation building in the new Republics;
- The transculturation of the idea of "democracy" in Latin America;

- Dictatorship and writing; censorship and resistance;
- Different forms of "frameworks for democracy": testimonial, transfeminist and queer literature, etc...;
- Decolonial theory and praxis and its relation to the construction of alternative democracies; the concept of the pluriverse;
- Themes related to democracy - participation, representation, freedom, equality, human rights, rule of law - and their representation in Latin American literature;
- Issues of race, class and gender in Latin American literature (injustices, inequalities, silences, epistemic reconstitution and resignification, alternative narratives);
- Latin American writers as agents of political change;
- The configuration of an alternative Latin American canon for an alternative democracy;
- Writing and ecology, or decolonial ecologies (Ferdinand, 2019);
- Material or economic relations between literature and democracy: alternative forms of publication, circulation and distribution;
- Theoretical concepts such as "dis-possession" (Rivera Garza, 2013) in dialogue with "frameworks for democracy".

Length and presentation of contributions:

Articles should not exceed 40,000 characters (including spaces), within which an abstract in English, notes and final bibliography should be included. Articles will be subject to double blind peer review. The accepted languages are Italian, Spanish and English.

Editorial guidelines are available at: <https://www.rivistacostellazioni.org/norme-redazionali>.

Proposals (title, abstract and summary bibliography on the topic) should be sent by June 15, 2024, accompanied by a brief biography (maximum 100 words), to the following e-mail addresses: lucy.bell@uniroma1.it, chiara.bolognese@uniroma1.it, stefano.tedeschi@uniroma1.it. The final articles should be sent to the editors by September 30, 2025.

Once the peer review process has been completed and any modifications to the materials requested by the reviewers or volume editors have been made, editorial work will begin.

Publication date: October 1, 2026.