

## VII INTERNATIONAL JOSÉ SARAMAGO CONFERENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIGO

### "JOSÉ SARAMAGO'S PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL HERITAGE"

Vigo, 26-29 October 2021

On the world literary scene, José Saramago definitely holds today a prominent place. The significant influence his work, which has already been translated into more than 50 languages, has had not only on the western culture but also on the public opinion in general, along with its international academic reception, make it enormously relevant.

Saramago's work deals with the most pressing issues of the world today: from gender equality, environmentalism, speciesism vs. anti-speciesism, consumerism vs. anti-consumerism, culturalism vs. anti-culturalism to capitalism and the neoliberal economy. That is why his work provides an excellent starting point for the critical examination of our globalised society and the cultures and economic and political structures of the West, which have been affected by ongoing crises in recent times.

In 2022 we will be celebrating José Saramago's centenary and the International José Saramago Chair of the University of Vigo intends to turn its VII Conference into an especially large event with even greater international impact and media coverage than past editions. We will bring to Galicia as many representatives/members of the JaRICCA network ([Jangada – International Network of Chairs, Research Centres and Associations](#)) as possible, as well as researchers, students and other interested members of the public.

The theme for this VII Conference was taken from the book [Saramago's Philosophical Heritage](#) (2018), edited by Carlo Salzani (University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna) and Kristof Vanhoutte (University of the Free State, Bloemfontein), professors and philosophers from the [Paris Institute for Critical Thinking](#) (PACT), who are also co-organisers of this event.

As a first thematic axis, we will be exploring the great contemporary relevance of the philosophical legacy left by José Saramago, including questions related to animals, empathy, and anthropomorphism. The socio-political objectives of the JaRICCA network, among other arising from the [Universal Charter of Duties and Obligations of the Individuals](#) will also be tackled during our conference.

This Charter was inspired by the speech delivered by Saramago on 10th December 1998 in Stockholm, where he received the Nobel Prize. The document was composed at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM) by a Commission of international experts and later submitted to the United Nations in 2018. We aim to turn this Charter, along with the resulting international discussion on related topics, into the second thematic axis of our conference.

Finally, a third thematic axis will be the connection between the poetical and the political in José Saramago, which will be closely linked to the research project [Contemporary Poetry and Politics: Social Conflicts and Poetic Dialogisms](#), led by the CJS.

### Honorary Committee

Pilar del Río Sánchez Saramago, President of Fundação José Saramago  
Carlos Reis, Curator of the Centenary of José Saramago  
Fernando Aguiar-Branco, President of the Fundação Eng.º António de Almeida  
João Ribeiro de Almeida, President of Camões – Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua, I.P.  
Mário Caneva Moutinho, Rector of Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias  
Javier Lafuente Sancho, Rector of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona  
Luca Pietromarchi, Rector of Università degli Studi Roma Tre  
Anastas Gerdjikov, Rector of University of Sofia “Sveti Kliment Ohridski”  
Manuel Joaquín Reigosa Roger, Rector of Universidade de Vigo

### Scientific Committee

Alma Delia Miranda, Cátedra Extraordinaria José Saramago – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México  
Ana Isabel García López, Cátedra José Saramago – Universidad de Granada  
Ana Paula Arnaut, Universidade de Coimbra  
Fátima Marinho, Universidade do Porto  
Fernando Gómez Aguilera, Fundación César Manrique  
Filipa Soares, Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua, I. P.  
Isabel Pires de Lima, Universidade do Porto  
Kathrin Saringen, Universität Wien  
Manuel Frias Martins, Universidade de Lisboa  
Miguel Koleff, Cátedra Libre José Saramago – Universidad Nacional de Córdoba  
Orlando Grossegese, Universidade do Minho  
Paulo de Medeiros, University of Warwick  
Teresa Cristina Cerdeira, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro

### Organising Committee

Burghard Baltrusch, I Cátedra Internacional José Saramago – Universidade de Vigo (coord.)  
Carlos Nogueira, I Cátedra Internacional José Saramago – Universidade de Vigo  
Carlo Salzani, Paris Institute for Critical Thinking / University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna  
Kristof Vanhoutte, Paris Institute for Critical Thinking / University of the Free State, Bloemfontein  
Alba Vidal, I Cátedra Internacional José Saramago – Universidade de Vigo

### Confirmed keynote speakers

Ana Paula Ferreira, University of Minnesota  
Kristof Vanhoutte, Paris Institute for Critical Thinking / University of the Free State, Bloemfontein  
[2 to be confirmed]

## General Call for papers

The VII International Conference “José Saramago’s Philosophical and Socio-political Heritage”, will be held between 27 and 29 October 2022 at the city of Vigo and we are kindly inviting any researchers interested in Saramago’s work to participate by submitting a proposal for a 20-minute communication, followed by a short debate.

Abstracts must be no more than 350 word and must be accompanied by a brief biographical note (150 words).

Please send your proposals to [catedrasaramago@uvigo.gal](mailto:catedrasaramago@uvigo.gal) before 20 April 2022. Participants will receive notification of acceptance/rejection by 17 June, after evaluation by the Scientific Committee, according to the relevance of the proposal with regard to the conference topics and its originality.

Portuguese, Spanish, Galician and English will be the working languages of the conference.

A selection of the accepted papers will be eligible for publication, after double-blind peer review.

Proposals should have a direct relation with one or several of the following topics within the Saramaguian oeuvre:

1. Philosophy.
2. Politics.
3. Sociology.
4. Ethics (especially, the Charter of Duties and Obligations of the Individuals).
5. The poetical and the political.

## Specific Calls for papers

Together with the general call for papers, we are inviting researchers to consider also these specific calls for the following thematic panels:

**Panel 1 on "*Animals, Empathy, and Anthropomorphism in Saramago’s Work*",** organised by Carlo Salzani (University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna), within the context of the project on "The Limits of Imagination: Animals, Empathy, Anthropomorphism":

A by-now solid body of scholarship supports the claim that literary works enrich and enlarge our power of imagination, and consequently, as moral thinking too has a narrative form and is shaped by stories, our moral capacity. The work of Portuguese Nobel Laureate José Saramago is a case in point: both his fictional and nonfictional works carry a strong ethico-political charge that lies more in the power of his words and images than in explicit ideological postures. And a special focus of this charge is the empathetic demands his oeuvre puts forwards: Saramago’s literature teaches empathy and brings us in contact with other beings – human and nonhuman alike –, assigning us the task of going outside ourselves and meeting the Other. Animals in his works (especially, but not exclusively, dogs) perhaps even epitomize this ethical imperative, asking

the reader to meet the Other in all its forms, where anthropomorphism and its heuristic value is questioned and redefined.

As part of the VII International Conference “José Saramago’s Philosophical and Socio-political Heritage,” to be held in Vigo, Spain, on 27-29 October 2022, we invite proposals focusing specifically on animals, empathy, and anthropomorphism in Saramago’s work to be included in one or two panels. Abstracts must be no more than 350 word and must be accompanied by a brief biographical note (150 words). Please send your proposals to [catedrasaramago@uvigo.gal](mailto:catedrasaramago@uvigo.gal) before 20 April 2022 with the reference "Panel on *Animals, Empathy, and Anthropomorphism in Saramago’s Work*". Participants will receive notification of acceptance/rejection by 17 June. Portuguese, Spanish, Galician and English will be the working languages of this panel. For questions, please email [Carlo.Salzani@vetmeduni.ac.at](mailto:Carlo.Salzani@vetmeduni.ac.at).

**Panel 2 on "*The Poetical and the Political in José Saramago*"** organised by Burghard Baltrusch (Universidade de Vigo) within the context of the research project "Contemporary Poetry and Politics: Social Conflicts and Poetic Dialogisms (POEPOLIT II)":

In an 1989 interview, José Saramago characterised his writing as follows: "[...] I begin to understand that the novelist is probably something other than what I am. I'm a kind of poet who develops an idea. In my books things happen a bit like a fugue. There is a theme that is later subjected to different treatments in terms of timbres and movements. This can happen in my books. You reach the end of the reading with the impression of having read a long poem." This and similar statements from Saramago must of course be related to his politically-minded way of writing that aimed to convey memorability to what hegemonic discourses usually tend to turn invisible, and that always reclaimed ethical responsibility and action. In this sense, the panel wants to explore the relationship between the political and the poetic in its work in all possible dimensions.

As part of the VII International Conference “José Saramago’s Philosophical and Socio-political Heritage,” to be held in Vigo, Spain, on 27-29 October 2022, we invite proposals focusing specifically on the relations between the poetical and the political in Saramago’s work to be included in one panel. Abstracts must be no more than 350 word and must be accompanied by a brief biographical note (150 words). Please send your proposals to [catedrasaramago@uvigo.gal](mailto:catedrasaramago@uvigo.gal) before 20 April 2022 with the reference "Panel on *The Poetical and the Political in José Saramago*". Participants will receive notification of acceptance/rejection by 17 June. Portuguese, Spanish, Galician and English will be the working languages of this panel. For questions, please email [burg@uvigo.es](mailto:burg@uvigo.es).